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THE INDEPENDENT

Monday 9 March 1998 45p (R50p) No 3,553

Labour to sell policy papers to lobbyists

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

THE Labour Party is offering to sell policy documents to Westminster lobbyists in return for £1,000-a-year subscriptions. The *Independent* has learnt that the drive to engage the interest of professional public relations firms starts with a special Labour Party seminar at the end of this month at the party's Millbank headquarters.

They will be urged to pay £1,000 a year in subscriptions to receive detailed papers from the party's Millbank policy unit, reports from the national policy forum and all-party press releases announcing policy decisions.

The deal does not involve direct access to the policy-making bodies, but it will help the lobbyists prepare strategies for their clients by getting an early sight of party policy thinking.

A Labour Party spokesman denied that the seminar on 31 March would be a fund-raising event. "We are inviting public affairs companies and corporate affairs executives. It is about explaining our policy process and the 'Partnership in Power' document that was adopted. We do look for sponsorship, but it is not directly to do with that."

The lobbyists will get papers being discussed by the national policy forum which is replacing the annual party conference as the main policy-making body in the party.

"We explain how the policy

process works and we can show them why it would be in their interests to pay £1,000 a year to receive the reports to our policy forums. We will be telling the firms the material that comes from the national policy forum will be available to them if they subscribe," said the spokesman.

A spokesman for William Hague, the Tory party leader, said: "These lobbyists will not be going for fun. They want access and influence for their clients."

Tony Blair was elected partly on a pledge to clean up British politics after the disclosures of Tory sleaze, and a number of lobbyists have gone out of their way to clean up the reputation of their business.

The disclosure that Bernie Ecclestone, head of Formula One motor racing, had donated £1m before lobbying the Prime Minister to stop a ban on tobacco advertising on the sport opened the Government to the charge of Labour accepting large sums of money for influence. It repaid the money, but the charge was reopened by the Tories following a report in *Sunday Business* that Lord Sainsbury had paid £2m to the party, twice the sum earlier reported, through his solicitors.

Lord Sainsbury, who was awarded a life peerage after the election by Mr Blair, is a member of the family which owns the supermarket chain that lobbied with Tesco and Safeway against planning controls on out-of-town supermarkets.

Ministers are adamant that no one can buy influence with the Government, but the Tories are planning to raise the reports in the Commons this week.

A Tory party spokesman said: "What is of great concern is the suggestion that yet another large donation to the Labour Party has bought a policy U-turn."

The Tories will also be asking questions about the seminar for lobbyists. Invitations which are going out to the public relations companies offer policy forum papers, a monthly review of government policy by the policy unit within the Labour Party.

The speakers at the seminar include Matthew Taylor, assistant general secretary of the party and Hazel Blears, the new MP for Salford, and a member of the national policy forum. Those attending will also be able to meet members of the party's internal policy unit.

The seminar is highly sensitive for the party, which is anxious to avoid being accused of giving greater access to lobbyists than their own members to the production of party policy.

Some traditional Labour Party supporters were highly suspicious of the establishment of the national policy forum and the threat it represented to the power of the left-wing activists to gain a platform through the constituency parties at the annual party conference.

Prescott orders inquiry, page 8

And now for something completely predictable...



Half Monty: Terry Jones, Michael Palin and John Cleese waiting to be taken to a rehearsal in Aspen yesterday

Photograph: Gary Casley/Reuters

By Tim Cornwell
in Aspen, Colorado

It was a kinder, gentler, Monty Python that came to the tiny Wheeler Opera House. In a nostalgic and bittersweet occasion, with a wit that was whimsical rather than dangerous, they joked, reminisced, and indulged in fifty-something horseplay for a full house of American comics.

And Now For Something Somewhat Predictable. Python's five surviving members, after appearing on stage together for the first time in 18 years, have agreed - more or less - to do a six-week run of live shows in America

and Britain. The decision came as they met for a 90-minute tribute to their work, recorded for American television at the US Comedy Arts Festival in the Aspen ski resort. It was the Pythons' first public reunion since the death of Graham Chapman 10 years ago.

When Robert Klein, the American host, observed that Graham Chapman "would have loved this", Cleese retorted: "But he's dead. So fucking dead." They then turned his absence into the running joke of the evening, first producing an urn, then accidentally on purpose kicking his fake ashes on the floor. The best line of the night came afterwards, as the press de-

manded details of the proposed reunion tour, in London and several US cities on their 30th anniversary next year. "Is that a definite?" barked a US reporter. "I think so," said Cleese. "Unless anyone else dies. I would say it's about a 90 per cent definite."

The Pythons were in Aspen for a business meeting. Today a High Court suit begins over the rights to *The Life of Brian*. They accepted an invitation from the US cable network HBO to do the show, watched on Saturday night by a small audience heavy with US comic luminaries such as *Cheers*' Ted Danson. It was a very unPython format: older men in armchairs, not quite in

cardigans but almost, answering questions relayed from the Internet. The strangest moments came as they sat, like the ghosts of Python present, awkwardly watching their younger selves playing the Parrot Sketch and other classics. Cleese guffawed, watching the screen: Michael Palin looked out at the audience, unsmiling; Terry Gilliam quietly sipped water. Against the back drop of Gilliam's cartoons, they talked of how it was almost Gwen Dibley's Flying Circus, how masturbating was the one word banned by the BBC, how they all learned to be funny in boarding school, and why some skits worked with real women and others demanded drag.

How Serbs made a village vanish

By Andrew Gumbel
in Prekaz

THE SERBS made sure they removed the dead and wounded before they let the outside world see Prekaz, the village in Kosovo that they had bombarded for three days. But the evidence of destruction was all too evident: houses peppered with bullet marks, and what looked like shell holes, while walls ripped down, doorways and roofs blasted to pieces and reduced to black, smouldering wrecks.

Such was the result of the

"anti-terrorist" operation to flush armed Albanian separatists out of one of the most militant ethnic Albanian villages in this southern Serbian province. The target of the onslaught was the Jashari family, the clan whose houses dotted around Prekaz have come under police attack repeatedly since 1991 and whose members are suspected of masterminding the murders of Serb policemen and their Albanian informers.

According to the police, 26 members of the Jashari family are now dead, including their

commander, Adem. The police minimised the ferocity of their onslaught, unconvincedly blaming the gaping holes in roofs on grenades left by the "terrorists" inside the houses. Even the Serbs admit that the violence went further than the few members of the family on the run from the law. "There were some women who refused to leave their houses who were killed," admitted Veliko Odalovic, Kosovo's deputy governor.

Albanian sources put the death toll in Prekaz at 80 or higher. Terrified women and children

fleeing the village on tractors reported that houses were fire-bombed to force them out, and that any men over the age of 15 whom the Serbs caught were executed. Some fled into the woods, where they were tracked by police snipers. None of those reported missing has been seen.

Prekaz yesterday was a ghost village. Only a stray calf and a clutch of black roosters showed any signs of life. The road was strewn with automatic weapon cartridges; all cars and tractors had vanished. The road was dotted with police jeeps and

snipers lying under trees or on the crests of hills. At the entrance to the village was a makeshift command post with sandbags piled high on either side.

Mr Odalovic said the anti-terrorist operation in Prekaz and nearby villages, which began on Thursday, had ended. He gave no indication when the thousands of refugees might be able to return to their homes. Albanian sources suggested that police snipers were still besieging at least four villages.

Ministers from the six-nation Contact Group, comprising the

United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia are holding emergency talks in London today to try to resolve the crisis. Amid fears of another savage Balkan war, Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, is expected to push for measures including the enlargement of the UN peace-keeping force in neighbouring Macedonia. In Bonn, the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, said the world could not afford "another awful conflagration in Europe".

Kosovo reports, page 11

Today's news

Call for Murdoch probe

Paddy Ashdown is calling for Rupert Murdoch's ownership of the *Times* to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Page 2

Adams admission

The Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, has admitted he did not expect a united Ireland to emerge from the Stormont talks. Page 8

Royals fall out

The Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles are said to disagree on plans to reform the monarchy. Page 3

Indonesia chaos looms

Indonesia faced the threat of more economic turmoil after president Suharto suggested he might reject \$4.3bn IMF rescue plan. Page 12

England may lose its shirts to Germany

By Andrew Yates

GERMANY, England's arch enemies on the football pitch, could soon be making the team's "three lions" strip. Adidas and Puma, the German sportswear giants, have emerged as favourites to produce England's kit after Umbro, the US-owned group which currently clothes the England team, ran into financial difficulties.

Umbro had won a new £50m contract to supply the team's kit for the next four years. However the Football Association is increasingly concerned about the group's financial position and is considering putting the contract up for auction again.

City bankers are sounding out rivals about potential bids for Umbro. The company's financial problems and a possible take-over could have big repercussions for English football. As



Not coming home? England's kit deal could be up for grabs

well as supplying kit for Premiership teams such as Manchester United, Chelsea and Everton, the group also has Alan Shearer, the England skipper, and the Liverpool wonderboy Michael Owen in its stable.

Adidas and Puma are both keen to supply the England kit, and could look to take on the contract either as potential suitors for Umbro or by submitting a bid to the FA.

Nike, the US company which lost out to Umbro in the original bidding war for the England contract and which is desperate to increase its presence in the British market, is also interested.

Umbro's kit contract expires after this summer's World Cup finals in France. Its proposed deal with England would be the second-biggest in the history of the game. Only Brazil's £250m, 10-year deal with Nike is worth more. The FA contract is with the British arm of Umbro, which was chosen to keep the contract in British hands. The FA may be forced to look overseas if it does not receive cast-iron financial guarantees from the group.

The doubt about Umbro's future raises a question mark over the a kit deal it recently signed with Manchester United, worth an estimated £40m over six years.

Umbro is looking to raise substantial new capital through loans or issuing new equity in order to stem its cash crisis. However the refinancing of the group is likely to take months, a delay which the FA may not be willing to put up.

The FA's executive committee is understood to be meeting this week to discuss Umbro's problems.



weekend
7pm on

PEOPLE LIFE NEWS

TOMORROW

- Sophie B Hawkins.
The omnisequal queen of
lesbian chic
- John Thaw: I wish I'd been a
song and dance man
- Are women turned off by
technology
NETWORK+
- Annette
Crosbie: Her
race to save
greyhounds



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Recycled paper made up 41.4%
of the raw material for UK new
papers in the first half of 1997.

Murdoch monopoly inquiry demanded

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

A call for a fresh reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission of Rupert Murdoch's ownership of the *Times* was made last night by Paddy Ashdown over allegations that the media mogul has broken pledges he gave at the time of the takeover by his global company, News Corporation. The Liberal Democrat leader wrote to Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, suggesting recent allegations of Mr Murdoch's influence over the *Times*'s coverage of China to protect his interests in the Star satellite television network amounted to a breach of undertakings made by News Corporation in 1981 when it took over the *Times* to avoid a reference to the MMC by the Thatcher government.

The evidence of Mr Murdoch's influence over his publishing companies was increased by his apology to Chris Patten following the refusal of the publishing house, HarperCollins, which Mr Murdoch also owns, to publish the ex-Hong Kong governor's memoirs on China. The controversy led to allegations by Jonathan Minsky, the *Times*'s former China correspondent, that Mr Murdoch has suppressed criticism of the Chinese regime in the *Times* to avoid damaging his satellite business in the region.

Mr Ashdown, speaking on the GMTV programme, said: "I believe there is sufficient now for this to be a matter which the Secretary of State and Industry should look at." Mr Murdoch's commitments to the independent editorial integrity of the *Times* were included in the articles

of association for the *Times* group and deposited with the then secretary of state for trade in January 1981 when the takeover of the *Times* was approved without a reference to the MMC.

The undertakings covered protection of the editorial quality and integrity of the *Times* titles. They stated: "In particular, Mr Murdoch subscribes to and undertakes to observe the following principles relating to editorial integrity... (a) The *Times* and the *Sunday Times* are free from party political bias and from attachment to any section interest. They will be subject to a restraint or inhibition either in expressing opinion or in reporting news that might directly or indirectly conflict with the commercial interests or political concern of the proprietor." Professor Minsky alleged: "The *Times* has simply decided because of Murdoch's interests not to cover China in a serious way."

When Mr Murdoch was in Peking, Professor Minsky alleged, he told a *Times* correspondent he did not want to hear reports that the "Shanghai miracle" was a mirage. "In fact, I would like you to write a piece about Shanghai for *The Sun*," Mr Murdoch is alleged to have said. Mr Minsky said: "We have here what is arguably the most famous newspaper in the world and it has just decided it has taken not an executive decision but an owner's position to leave China and Hong Kong alone."

Last week the *Times* editor, Peter Stothard, denied the claims of proprietorial interference. On BBC radio yesterday Andrew Neil, former *Sunday Times* editor, said anyone who challenged Mr Murdoch would not stay in place for long.

Bennetton pays lip service to conflict

By Matthew Kalman



Cover shot: Israeli Enyar Lazarus and her Bedouin boyfriend Musa Mazareb

AFTER snogging nuns, copulating horses and dying Aids victims, the latest Benetton catalogue is expected to arouse its usual level of controversy.

Titled "Enemies", its cover features 24-year-old Israeli student Enyar Lazarus passionately kissing her Bedouin boyfriend, Musa Mazareb, 22. Inside are pictures of Arabs and Jews playing, loving and working together. It will be distributed by *Newsweek* and a network of publications around the globe in six million copies and 14 different languages.

"If journalists would be artists, and if politicians would be artists, probably the world would be different," said Benetton creative director Oliviero Toscani, launching the catalogue in Jerusalem. Last year's catalogue was shot in Corleone, headquarters of the Sicilian Mafia. He denies exploiting suffering simply to sell knitwear.

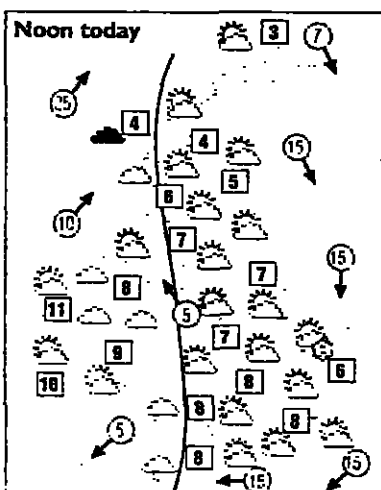
"You can't do that," he said. "There are companies who employ minor labour in order to sell shoes. We don't do that. You can't accuse me of exploiting Aids to sell sweaters because you can't exploit Aids. Coca-Cola doesn't touch Aids."

Toscani, who has helped Benetton and its associate companies grow into the fourth largest conglomerate in Italy, says that Benetton's capitalism with a conscience is a model which others will follow. "The company of the future, the one that is to survive in the future, is the company that will have a social-political responsibility."

Shooting the pictures in Israel last autumn became a media event. "While I was shooting I had a lot of press following me because actually they were quite pleased to be in Jerusalem not for filming blood or bombs or killing, but something else."

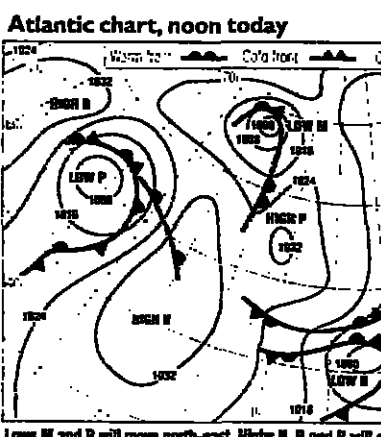
Toscani makes no apologies for being overtly political. "Any image has got a political meaning, even a postcard," he said.

FORECAST



Today's forecast
Northern Ireland, west Wales and south-west England will have showery outbreaks of light rain at first, but it will become drier and brighter. The rest of England and Wales will have a mainly fine day with some good sunny breaks, but it will be cold with frost early and late. The odd light wintry shower is also possible along North Sea coasts. Meanwhile, much of Scotland will be dry with sunny periods. However, it will be cold, and the far north-west will have rain and hail-snow later.

Outlook for the next few days
Tomorrow will be windy in Scotland and Northern Ireland with outbreaks of rain. Initially snow is likely over the hills, but temperatures will quickly recover bringing a rapid thaw. Wales and the rest of England will also see rain before the end of the day, but further south it will stay dry and bright. On Wednesday early rain will clear the south-east, leaving a blustery day with sunny spells and wintry showers. More rain will reach Scotland and Northern Ireland on Thursday.



Air quality

Location	NO ₂	SO ₂	Good	Good
London	Good	Good	Good	Good
S. England	Good	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good	Good	Good

Outlook for today

Location	Good	Good	Good
London	Good	Good	Good
S. England	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good	Good

British Isles weather most recent available figure at noon local time

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Pressure
Aberdeen	10	10	10	10
Amesbury	10	10	10	10
Birmingham	10	10	10	10
Belfast	10	10	10	10
Blackpool	10	10	10	10
Bournemouth	10	10	10	10
Brighton	10	10	10	10
Bristol	10	10	10	10
Cardiff	10	10	10	10
Canterbury	10	10	10	10
Exeter	10	10	10	10
Glasgow	10	10	10	10
Harrogate	10	10	10	10
Leeds	10	10	10	10
London	10	10	10	10
Manchester	10	10	10	10
Newcastle	10	10	10	10
Nottingham	10	10	10	10
Sheffield	10	10	10	10
Southampton	10	10	10	10
Stirling	10	10	10	10
Swansea	10	10	10	10
Torquay	10	10	10	10
York	10	10	10	10

High tides

Location	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	11.16	6.4	23.47	6.5
Liverpool	08.48	8.0	21.18	8.2
Avonmouth	04.18	10.8	16.57	11.2
Hull (Albert Dock)	03.45	7.4	16.09	7.7
Gosport	08.48	2.8	22.49	2.9
Dun Laoghaire	09.15	3.9	21.45	3.8

Lighting-up times

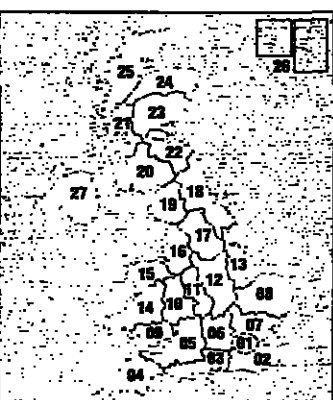
Location	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55
Belfast	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55
Birmingham	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55
Bristol	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55
Glasgow	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55
London	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55
Manchester	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55
Newcastle	18.15	18.01	18.04	18.08	17.55

Sun rises 06.29 Sun sets 17.55
Moon rises 14.15 Moon sets 04.41
Full Moon March 13

Out and about with AA Roadwatch
Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

World weather most recent available figure at noon local time

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Pressure
Aberdeen	10	10	10	10
Amesbury	10	10	10	10
Birmingham	10	10	10	10
Belfast	10	10	10	10
Blackpool	10	10	10	10
Bournemouth	10	10	10	10
Brighton	10	10	10	10
Bristol	10	10	10	10
Cardiff	10	10	10	10
Canterbury	10	10	10	10
Exeter	10	10	10	10
Glasgow	10	10	10	10
Harrogate	10	10	10	10
Leeds	10	10	10	10
London	10	10	10	10
Manchester	10	10	10	10
Newcastle	10	10	10	10
Nottingham	10	10	10	10
Sheffield	10	10	10	10
Southampton	10	10	10	10
Stirling	10	10	10	10
Swansea	10	10	10	10
Torquay	10	10	10	10
York	10	10	10	10



INDEPENDENT Weatherline
For the latest forecasts dial 0800 5009 followed by the two digit to give area indicated by the above map.
Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

WILLIAM HARTSTON WEATHER WISE

MRS MARGARET Withers has written from Launceston, with an intriguing observation: "Apologising for leading someone into the mire in a wood in Devon yesterday, I recalled recent features regarding how many words people who live in the Arctic have for 'snow', and I asked him how many words he thought the English might have for such muddy places. 'More than a hundred in Devon alone' he replied."

Well such an assertion had to be put to the test, so I loaded my trusty CD-Rom of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and asked it for all the words including "mud" in their definition. The results were astounding. There is clabber (or clabber), cloam, cooky-mete, fane, groot, grummel, gutter, limus, lunulence, moli, slabber, sleek, teech, slite, slip, slobber, slubber, slutch and sposh, all of which just mean mud (though some are stickier than others,

and others are softer than some). If you are looking for a muddy adjective, you may choose from clabbery, coenose, fenny, glauzy, grooty, grouty, gumby, guttery, miry, muddy, pudgyroily, slaky, slobby, slumpy, slutchy, suddy or troublous, among others.

In all there are 111 words with "muddy" in their definitions, and 313 whose definitions include the word "mud".

Here is a short glossary of muddy gems in our language: antipogelos: coverings to protect legs against wet mud; bedrabbles: make wet and dirty with mud and rain; beluge: clog with wet mud; belute: cover with mud; besmattered: spattered as with mud; blask: very liquid mud (or poor tea); bymored: smeared with mud; clart: sticky dirt or mud; clatty: of mud; mud-built; cod: mud from the bottom of a river; daggie: clog with wet mud; dash: bespatter with mud (hence a car's dash-board); drabble: make wet and dirty by contact with mud; draggie-tail: skirts that drag through mud; dule: a muddy pool or puddle; fango: therapeutic mud from the thermal springs at Battaglia; flop: a mass of thin mud; gausash: leggings worn to protect against mud; gumbo: mud of the prairies; hart: an implement for raking mud; horse: a mud or sand bank; immud: bury in mud; limulocous: living in mud; limose: pertaining to the nature of mud; lotarous: inhabiting mud; moya: volcanic mud; mudfish: somewhat muddy oblation: covering with mud; pelotherapy: applying mud to the body therapeutically; plunge: cleanse by stirring up mud so that water flow will carry it away; poach: plod through mud; poss: splash in mud; pudder dabble in mud; pug: trample into a muddy mess; putty: sticky mud at the bottom of water; riley: thick turbid mud; slobland: muddy ground, especially on the seashore; slumgullion: muddy deposit in a mining sluice; soss: splash in mud; stabble: liquid mud caused by continuous traffic; stable: stick fast in mud; stog: to be stuck in mud; studdie: stir up water to make muddy; wasel: trample in mud.

So the next time you are wassling on slobland and someone bedrabbles your gamash with clart, don't just stare with dismay at your besmattered antipogelos, but relish instead the linguistic diversity with which you may describe your dilemma.

And if anyone else ever tries to confound you with allegations about Eskimo words for snow, just look him straight in the eye and say: "They have nothing to match the 313 English words for mud, you know."

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John 20.15.20

House of Windsor split over its new look

By Kim Sengupta

Plans to reform the Royal Family led to claims yesterday that Prince Philip is obstructing change, and counter-claims that MPs leaked details of the plan prematurely and embarrassed Buckingham Palace.

According to reports in several newspapers yesterday, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales are said to be on opposing sides on the reforms, with the Queen steering a difficult and delicate course, although she is aware of the public mood for change since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Prince Philip is known to have the support of the Queen Mother in his opposition to the proposals, which include the abolition of bowing and curtsying and the restriction of the title "royal highness". He is said to have strongly expressed his disapproval to Charles's office and Buckingham Palace officials.

The Duke's view is that the reforms of the 1960s and 70s have not benefited the family, and going further down that path would weaken the monarchy. He is also believed to resent the perception that change is being driven by the death of the Princess of Wales.

The reform package was discussed by the Way Ahead group of Royal advisers presided over by the Queen and attended by the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and the Princess Royal.

There was said to be acute annoyance at the Palace that the details were then leaked to the press.

Some courtiers believe that Tony Blair's government is trying to bounce the Royal Family into carrying out sweeping reforms, and the leak was designed to create a *fait accompli*.

One source said: "This is not the

first time this has happened. There has been a series of timed leaks, and discussion documents presented as facts. One has got to ask, who is driving the agenda and why?"

The Prime Minister and the majority of the Labour party are known strongly to favour the reforms.

Downing Street, however, has strenuously denied being responsible for the leaks.

Fresh evidence of the Government's desire for change came with reports that the Palace is being pressed to simplify the State Opening of Parliament by doing away with some of the traditional pomp.

Plans to reform the House of Lords, where the Queen makes her annual speech to Parliament, will now move ahead without further consultation with the Opposition.

Mr Blair is said to be angry at the leaking of contacts with the Conservatives on the reform package.

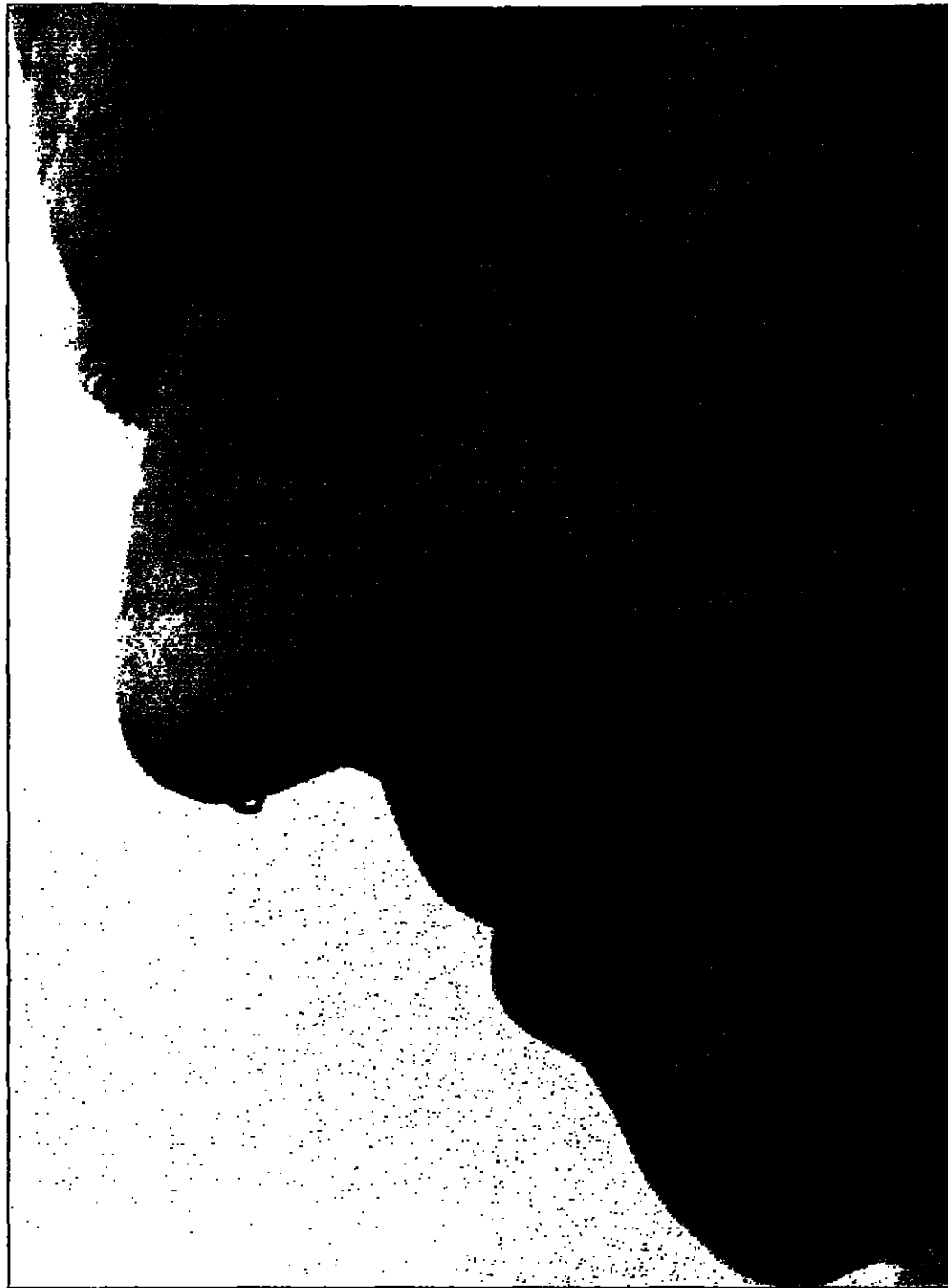
Moves to take the title of HRH away from the Duke of York's two daughters, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie, was another issue causing problems.

Labour MP Alan Williams, a senior member of the influential Commons Public Accounts Committee, and a long-term critic of royal expenditure, said that this might not be "the cleverest move, because some might interpret it, wrongly, as vindictive."

"I don't think it matters as far as the public are concerned."

Mr Williams added that the rest of the reform proposals were merely cosmetic and a "PR exercise".

He continued that the Royal Family should face up to the fact that "five Royal palaces just aren't justified. The Royal Household, its hangers-on and the wider Royal Family have to address the fact that the public doesn't owe them accommodation."



Opposition: Prince Philip is said to believe Royal reform has gone too far

Photograph: Freeman

PHILIP AND HIS LINEAGE

Confusing. His father, Prince Andrew of Greece, was a member of the Danish royal family. His mother, Princess Alice of Battenburg, was "English", but the family had been German.

The Duke of Edinburgh was a Greek prince who spoke a mixture of English and German, with a smattering of Greek.

PHILIP AND DUNBLANE

Perhaps the gaffe which caused the most trouble. Interviewed on radio after the massacre of children and with calls for gun control, he said: "If a cricketer, for instance, suddenly decided to go into a school and batter

a lot of people to death with a cricket bat... are you going to ban cricket bats?"

PHILIP AND PRINCESS ANNE

Talking about his daughter and her love of equestrianism, the Duke snorted: "If it doesn't fart or eat hay, she isn't interested."

PHILIP AND THE PRESS

Loathes it. He has been repeatedly attacked by the media for his more controversial statements, some say unfairly. After the Dunblane comment one tabloid asked readers to call a particular number if they thought he was a fool.

Why the Prince of put-downs is one of a kind

IN THE NEWS

PRINCE PHILIP

IT IS not surprising to find Prince Philip in the news again. He has often made the headlines, almost always for the wrong reasons, writes Kim Sengupta.

The Duke of Edinburgh is an equal-opportunities gaffmaker, not discriminating between countries and social strata when it comes to saying offensive or embarrassing things. In his time he has described the Chinese as "slitty-eyed", and the Hungarians as "pot-bellied". After the Dunblane massacre he declared a member of a shooting club was no more potentially dangerous than a cricketer, and also wondered why the unemployed cannot make up their mind whether they want more leisure time or not.

The Duke's reported opposition to the proposed reform of the Royals cannot however be dismissed as yet another silly intervention. By setting his face against the public mood for reform following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, Philip will be courting further unpopularity. The Government is determined to see the changes through, and it would be tempting and easy for the spin doctors to portray the Duke as an archaic symbol of an ancient regime.

But that would be too simplistic. According to senior sources, Prince Philip's misgivings about the pace and scale of change is shared by other senior, older members of the family, most notably the Queen Mother. The Queen, who is said to be charting a delicate course on the affair, can hardly ignore these views, and may well share the reservations herself.

It would also be simplistic to dismiss the Duke as a life-long reactionary. In the past he had in fact supported reforms of the Royals. But these reforms, he is now said to feel, proved to be misguided and helped to strip away the mystique of the monarchy.

Drastic further moves down this

avenue, he is said to believe, will end in its demise.

For such a staunch defender of the status quo, Philip is, in fact, something of an outsider. His father, Prince Andrew of Greece was arrested for treason in 1921 the year Philip was born. But at George V's behest the Government intervened, and a Royal Navy gunboat whisked the family from Corfu.

The family, broke, moved to Paris, where they lived in a borrowed house. A relative paid Philip's school fees, but when he was just 10 his parents split up. His father moved to Monte Carlo for the gambling and his mother became a nun.

His old friend and private secretary, Michael Parker, said: "When he needed a father, there just wasn't anybody there."

After Britannia Naval College in Dartmouth during the war, as a young officer, he sailed around the world and was involved in the battle of Cape Matapan, which saw the virtual destruction of the Italian Navy. Years later he was to tell the writer Fiammetto Rocco "I'd much rather have stayed in the Navy, frankly".

But it was not to be, instead Philip ended up as the husband of the future Queen and began his structured life ruled by pomp and protocol. He did however, manage to slip away occasionally from public gaze. There were rumours he had affairs with actress Pat Kirkwood and cabaret star Helene Cordet, but no one had ever offered any conclusive proof.

Prince Philip has now been at the Queen's side for almost twice as long as Prince Albert was with Victoria. It is unlikely he will have a memorial named after him.

But in one place in the world he will always remain sacred. A signed photograph of him is apparently a venerated object among the Lounhan tribe in the Solomon Islands.

Deadly toxin offers relief for sufferers of rare condition

By Ian Burrell

PATIENTS with a rare medical condition are desperate for injections of the deadliest substance known to man, a poison which Saddam Hussein is believed to have developed for use in biological warfare.

A single teaspoon of botulinum toxin could kill seven million people, but even tinier doses of the poison can be used to ease the suffering of patients with dystonia, a condition which causes uncontrollable spasms.

As a weapon, the toxin is designed to paralyse the respiratory system, leading to death by suffocation. But as a medicine it can be used to paralyse muscles and prevent them from responding to involuntary signals from the brain.

Dystonia can leave patients with their eyelids constantly twitching and blinking. Sometimes their eyes will not open at all and have to be prised apart with their fingers. Others suffer from a form of dystonia called torticollis which forces them to go into spasms and involuntarily twist their neck to the side.

According to Alan Leng, the chief executive of the Dystonia Society, botulinum toxin is a crucial aid to allowing such patients to live a more normal life. But many health authorities consider that at around £70 a vial it is too much of a strain on their budgets.

"Hospitals are not providing the doses that are required because the health authorities



Orford: Dismissed by the Army Photograph: Rich Marsham

are saying they don't have the money," Mr Leng said.

"People have been casting around for years for treatment and they are often desperate. This [toxin] brings a lot of relief to a lot of people."

There are 38,000 dystonia sufferers in Britain but the condition often goes unrecognised by doctors and by the authorities.

John Orford used to stand on duty outside Buckingham Palace as a Grenadier Guardsman until he was struck down by torticollis and was no longer able to stand up straight.

Unable to stop his head from twisting to the side he was mercilessly taunted by junior of-

ficers who said he resembled a nodding dog in the rear window of a car.

"The muscles seem to have a will of their own," he said. "I start shaking and my head will turn to the right, but if you try and fight it it only makes things worse."

Mr Orford believes he was in perfect medical condition until he wrenched his neck while doing sit-ups on an inclined bench as part of his army fitness training at the age of 18.

The incident triggered his torticollis and from then on he was unable to hold himself erect while on guard duty at the Palace or outside the Tower of

London. Army doctors said he had "wry neck" which they later told him had "settled".

Mr Orford continued to serve in the Guards, albeit on minor duties, and despite being taunted by colleagues to the point where he said he became "suicidal".

An Army psychiatrist told him that he was suffering from "phobic notions". Then, in 1979, four-and-a-half years after he joined the regiment at the age of 17, he was made to leave.

Weeks earlier, while on leave, his own GP had diagnosed torticollis. But instead of being given a medical discharge, the words "services no longer required" were written onto Mr Orford's record.

Since then his life, along with his medical condition, has deteriorated. He has been unable to hold down a job and now feels so ashamed of his shaking and twitching that he stays at home rather than risk being mocked at the pub or in shops. Only the botulinum toxin jabs give him temporary relief.

For nearly two decades he has campaigned for his record to be changed "to clear my name" and to show he could have been a competent guardsman if it had not been for his condition. But despite support for his claims by some of Britain's leading neurologists, the Ministry of Defence insists that the decisions of Army Medical Boards are final.

□ Dystonia Society 0171 490 5671.

GTech ban 'could halt Lottery'

The National Lottery could stop running for a year if US giant GTech were barred from supplying operator Camelot, it was reported yesterday.

Lottery watchdog Oflot is carrying out an inquiry into GTech after its former head, Guy Snowden, lost a libel case brought by the tycoon Richard Branson over a bribe to stop

him from bidding for the licence to run the lottery.

GTech, which holds a major stake in Camelot, will present a report on its performance on ethics and propriety to Oflot today.

Camelot said yesterday that it was not appropriate to comment on the matter until the results of the Oflot inquiry were

made public. John Stoker, the acting director-general of Oflot, could be considering moves to eject GTech from the consortium that owns Camelot, according to the *Sunday Times* newspaper.

Camelot is understood to have informed the Government that it would be impossible to replace GTech, which

supplies software, without causing huge disruption to the game, the paper said.

This move could cause a major loss of revenue to sales and good causes.

Other members of the consortium are electronics group Racal, Cadbury Schweppes, printers De La Rue and computing company ICL.

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Glenda Jackson, whose campaign is expected to focus on the inner cities, homelessness and cutting crime in London

Jackson gets Cabinet backing to be mayor

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

GLEND A Jackson is emerging as the Cabinet favourite to run for election as the mayor of London, with her supporters claiming backing by Gordon Brown.

The Chancellor is said by friends of Ms Jackson to see the double Oscar winner as the best candidate emerging to carry the Labour banner if the referendum for a directly elected mayor produces a "yes" vote on 7 May.

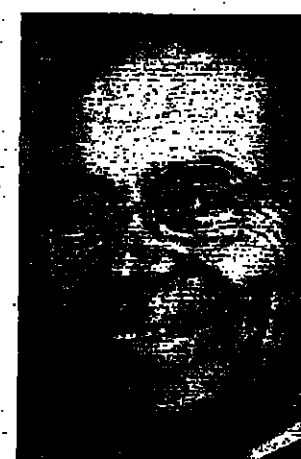
Ms Jackson, the transport minister for London, is also expected to have the tacit approval of John Prescott, her boss at the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, although as Deputy Prime Minister, he is not expected to endorse any candidate until one is agreed by the party.

'I'm vulgar. I'm a populist. But isn't that what the mayor should be?'

— Lord Archer

"John would not stand in Glenda's way," said one source close to Mr Prescott.

Ms Jackson is expected to campaign on the inner cities, homelessness and reducing crime in London, once her campaign starts in earnest. With two years to go, there is a danger of peaking too soon. But Lord Archer's bandwagon to become the Tory candidate for London's mayor has been rolling for months.



Lord Archer said at the weekend that he had a campaign squad of six team leaders already in place with Greg Hutchins, a wealthy businessman, acting as his campaign treasurer and Stephen Shakespeare as a paid special adviser.

As a multi-millionaire, Lord Archer may take some stopping, even by Tory leaders who are still hoping to find a heavyweight, such as Chris Patten, the former Governor of Hong Kong, as a "stop Jeffrey" candidate.

Tory leaders fear that the irrepressible Lord Archer could embarrass the party. He said at the weekend: "I'm vulgar. I'm a populist. But isn't that what the mayor should be?"

The Tories are committed to holding an internal one-member, one-vote ballot to select a candidate but are threatening to

boycott the "vote yes" campaign in the referendum, because they oppose an assembly for London.

Labour has yet to declare its preferred system for selecting its candidate, but it too is likely to opt for one-member one-vote for the primaries among Labour members in London.

Ms Jackson's campaign team is likely to be headed by her son, Dan Hodges, who is the spokesman for the road haulage association. The association's head, Steve Norris, a former Tory transport minister who held Ms Jackson's job, could be a strong Tory candidate, if he chose to stand against Lord Archer.

Ms Jackson is being careful to avoid making any public declaration, but a senior ministerial source said: "She is very keen to stand and she would have a lot of solid backing."

Amid intense jockeying for position, Trevor Phillips, the broadcaster, is being promoted as a possible candidate allegedly with the support of Peter Mandelson, the Minister Without Portfolio.

There is plenty of backstabbing going on, even before the race has started, with one Cabinet source warning that other Labour runners would not stand down for Mr Phillips, if he stood as an independent candidate.

There is also a "stop Ken" campaign to block Ken Livingstone, former leader of the Greater London Council, from gaining Labour's candidacy in the primaries because he is too left wing.

Leading article, page 16

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Anger over vandalism of Stephen Lawrence plaque

The father of the murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence last night condemned vandals who daubed paint over the memorial stone placed at the scene of his son's death.

Mr Lawrence spoke out after the memorial plaque, located at the bus stop in Eltham, south east London, where his 18-year-old son was stabbed to death in April 1993, was found covered in white paint and chipped in an apparent attempt to erase Stephen's name. He said: "Of course we're upset about the damage but at the end of the day the memorial stone is a stone; my son was flesh and blood."

The attack on the stone comes just days before a major public inquiry is due to start into Stephen Lawrence's death.

Passengers flee fuel-leak jet

A plane-load of 249 passengers had to be evacuated just before take-off yesterday when fuel was spotted leaking from one of the engines. They used the emergency chutes on the Continental Airlines DC10 to reach the runway at Manchester Airport, from where they were led to the terminal building. Duty manager Chris Cain said the only injuries reported were minor cuts and bruises, although one woman fainted in the terminal. A spokesman for Greater Manchester Fire Service said a "very small fire" had broken out in the rear engine of the DC10 and was extinguished using foam.

Five portions-a-day health tip

People should eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, according to a healthy-eating campaign. The British Dietetic Association says whether fresh, frozen, canned, dried or juiced, fruit and vegetables are the secret to a healthy life. The World Cancer Research Fund says a diet rich in fruit and vegetables can prevent up to 20 per cent of cases of cancer.

Two share lottery riches

Two tickets shared last night £8,041,928 National Lottery jackpot. They each get £4,020,964 after matching six numbers, 14, 44, 11, 39, 4 and 43. The bonus ball was 37.

Merck, Sharp & Dohme

On 25 February, an article on cholesterol tests suggested that Merck, Sharp & Dohme did not market Lovastatin in the UK for commercial reasons. This information came from the NHS Centre for Reviews & Dissemination, which now acknowledges that MSD does not have the rights to market the drug in the UK. We now accept that this suggestion was incorrect.

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Single men responsible for little but trouble

By Diana Coyle
Economics Editor

IT IS single men, not lone mothers, we should be worrying about. Governments on both sides of the Atlantic are wrong to think welfare reforms should be targeted on the growing numbers of mothers bringing up their children alone, according to newly-published research.

There has been a dramatic decline in the proportion of young men either married or cohabiting and living with children. This has been paralleled by soaring crime rates,

drug and alcohol abuse and numbers of prisoners.

In a paper in the latest issue of *The Economic Journal*, George Akerlof, an eminent economist at Berkeley in California, provides evidence that neither over-generous welfare nor unemployment - the classic right-wing and left-wing explanations, respectively, for social ills - can explain these problems.

Rather, he argues, their source is the unwillingness of young men to settle down and get married. Their lack of responsibilities allows them to carry on misbehaving well

beyond their teens in an escalating spiral of violence.

But they inflict harm upon themselves as well as society more generally. The figures show that married men earn more, are less likely to be unemployed, are less often the victims or perpetrators of crimes, have fewer accidents and are less likely to die of a wide range of diseases than their unmarried peer group. The reason seems to be, quite simply, having a woman to look after them better than they would themselves.

According to the US figures on which

the research is based, between 1968 and 1993 the fraction of men aged 25 to 34 who stayed single climbed from a third to three-fifths. For this growing group of men, Professor Akerlof writes: "The indiscretions, and worse, of the past will become the forerunners of greater misdeeds." And the problem escalates with each successive generation of youths, going one step further than their older role models.

The men who never marry are seven times more likely to end up in prison and four times more likely to be the victim of a violent crime. They are also more than

twice as likely to be involved in an accident, including car accidents.

The single men's prospects are dimmer in other ways, especially in the jobs market.

For example, every year of marriage adds up to 0.9 per cent to wages. Although this premium might have declined during the 1990s, ten years of marriage on average mean a level of wages up to a fifth higher than that earned by a comparable single man.

The paper suggests that the explanation might be the fact that married men are

more likely to have a woman taking care of their domestic needs, leaving them with more free time and less hassle.

Professor Akerlof concludes that the policy of cutting benefits for lone mothers to encourage them to work is misguided. This has gone much further in the US, where welfare benefits have fallen by more than half in real terms in the past 25 years.

He writes: "I take a view so old that it is new - welfare mothers are poor and unfortunate and therefore deserving of decent support."

No place like home, Page 17

A dancer on her uppers finds the answer to school fees lying at her feet



A TALENTED teenager is hoping to fund her training at a top London dance school by selling signed photographs of her feet in ballet shoes.

Hanna Tatham, 17, has been offered places at both the London Contemporary Dance School and the Laban Centre when she finishes her A-level in dance at sixth-form college.

However, because they are private establishments, she does not qualify for a mandatory grant, and the local council does not give out discretionary awards.

So Hanna and her family, who live in Totnes, Devon, have started a campaign to raise about £8,000 - the tuition costs for a three-year course at either of the schools.

The family are hoping to sell hundreds of signed copies of the specially-commissioned picture to friends and supporters for £20 each. So far, they have had a great response.

Her father, Dr Peter Tatham, a psychotherapist, said: "We are appealing against the council's decision, and we are also writing to various trusts to try and find the money, but the likelihood is that we will have to find most of the £8,000 ourselves."



Strapped for cash: Hanna Tatham is selling signed prints of her feet (above) for £20 to fund her dance studies

Photographs: Dave McLough

Scottish hospitals ignore cancer guidance

A NUMBER of the hospital trusts in Scotland which treat women suffering from ovarian cancer are not following guidance which could save lives, a report published today reveals.

An independent Accounts Commission study of the 26 hospital trusts which treat women suffering from the form of cancer known as "the silent killer", reveals that less than one-third of hospital trusts are following key guidelines on the care of patients.

Its authors describe survival rates of ovarian cancer in Scotland as "poor", with only 29 per cent of women surviving five years after the disease is diagnosed, compared with 38 per cent in Switzerland and 36 per cent in Finland.

They find that there is "considerable variation" across Scotland in the extent to which guidelines, aimed at improving survival prospects, are implemented.

And they say the NHS in Scotland needs to "make more progress" in implementing the recommendations.

The guidelines, which exist only for the NHS in Scotland, include recommendations on referral, surgery, post-surgical care and chemotherapy treatment for women patients.

The Accounts Commission survey shows that only nine health trusts, out of the 26 that treat ovarian cancer, have put into place the recommendation that when ovarian cancer is suspected, patients should be referred instantly to a "specialist gynaecologist".

And only 16 have implemented the guideline recommendation that after surgery patients should be referred to a combined gynaecology and oncology unit, where they will be cared for by a team of experts.

Caroline Gardner, director of health studies at the Accounts Commission, said that at this stage the hospital trusts which appeared not to be providing the highest level of care would not be "named and shamed" but had been informed of where they were falling down, and had been given an action plan for improvement. If improvement does not follow, she said the commission "may consider" naming those at fault.

Over 500 new cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed each year in Scotland. It is known as "the silent killer" because it produces vague symptoms such as abdominal pain and swelling and can go undetected for a long time.

Muslims protest over Channel 4 cartoon

By Kathy Marks

CHANNEL 4 executives will meet today to decide whether to broadcast an animated film about Islam which has drawn complaints from sections of the Muslim community.

The 15-minute film, aimed at primary school pupils, is part of a weekly series about world religions. It is due to be screened tomorrow morning as part of children's programmes.

At issue is whether a ban under Islamic law on the visual portrayal of the Prophet Mohammed and his four main disciples, the Khalifs, also covers his lesser companions. The Muslim leaders who want the programme withdrawn contend that it does.

Imams at some mosques have urged their worshippers to send letters of protest to education authorities and schools, in the hope of persuading them to boycott the film.

At today's meeting, executives will consider representa-

tions made to them by religious leaders. They also plan to seek advice from Channel 4's consultant on Islam, Dr Mashuq Ally, a Muslim academic. But it seems highly unlikely that the film will be pulled.

A Channel 4 spokesman said yesterday that the complaints did not necessarily represent the views of the wider British Muslim community. He described the dispute as "an issue of narrow theological concern".

The spokesman acknowledged that it was "sensitive territory".

"But this is not a work of literature, and the issue is not one of artistic freedom," he said. "This is an educational film and, while we want to avoid causing genuine offence, it may well be that the film in its current form would not offend the majority of Muslims."

Sources at the station say executives are highly reluctant to be seen to be dictated to by parts of the Muslim community.

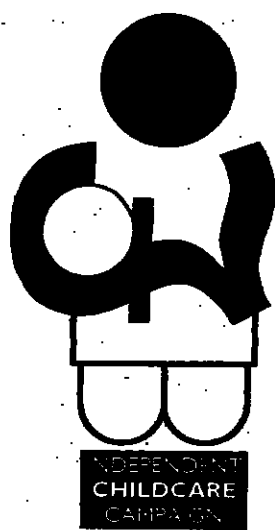
Childcare clubs 'will need at least £300m from business and councils'

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

BUSINESSES and local authorities will have to contribute at least £300m a year on top of parental fees if the Government's scheme for out-of-school clubs is to work, the Kids' Club Network (KCN) warned today.

While the Government has promised £300m in total to set up 30,000 clubs with a million places, a substantial investment by local business, local authorities and fundraising activities will have to be made if the clubs are to succeed. At present only 5 per cent of schools provide or facilitate out-of-school childcare and only 3 per cent of employers provide out-of-school childcare for their employees.

The *Independent* is campaigning for the Chancellor to invest in the nation's children by giving working mothers a tax allowance to help with the cost of childcare.



The Kids' Club Network has calculated that an average club for 30 children costs £40,000 a year to run. "We assume that average parental fees will cover £30,000 of these costs [but] that club will need to find

a further £10,000 a year. In low-income areas this figure could be substantially bigger."

The £10,000 would then have to be found from a mixture of fundraising, local authority and local business - £3,300 each, on average. "The implications are that funds are going to have to be found from somewhere else," said Ann Longfield of the KCN. "They are not going to be self-financing."

Meanwhile, the Daycare Trust called on the Chancellor to use a childcare tax credit to make childcare more affordable for parents. "Making childcare more affordable will maximise the Government's £300m investment in expanding childcare by creating a stream of revenue to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of new and existing places," said Colette Kelleher, director of the trust.

The Budget on 17 March provides the Government with a "real opportunity" to help low-income families, says the charity.

British families currently pay the highest childcare bills in Europe. A family with two children - one pre-school and one child at school needing after-school and holiday care - typically faces bills of more than £6,000 per annum. At present, fewer than 30,000 families get help with childcare costs through the benefits system.

The Daycare Trust argues that a childcare tax credit would be available to many more families on low incomes, would be simple to understand and would provide realistic levels of help.

To provide incentives to go to work the tax credit needs to be set at a high rate - with a top rate subsidy of 90 per cent of childcare costs. To avoid poverty traps, subsidies also need to be available to families on the next income bracket up, with a gradually decreasing subsidy rate.

The trust is also calling for a "back-to-work childcare grant" to provide free childcare for the first six months in employment for people leaving income support and a "childcare for training grant" to help lone parents in full-time education or training.

"Making childcare more affordable has many benefits," said Ms Kelleher. "It will underpin the success of the welfare to work programme; it will help tackle social exclusion; it will improve the quality of childcare services and it will sustain the Government's expansion in childcare places."

She added: "A childcare subsidy within the working families' tax credit is the first much-needed step towards making childcare more affordable in the UK. With increasing numbers of mothers with young children returning to work, employers need an effective childcare infrastructure as much as they need roads and railways."

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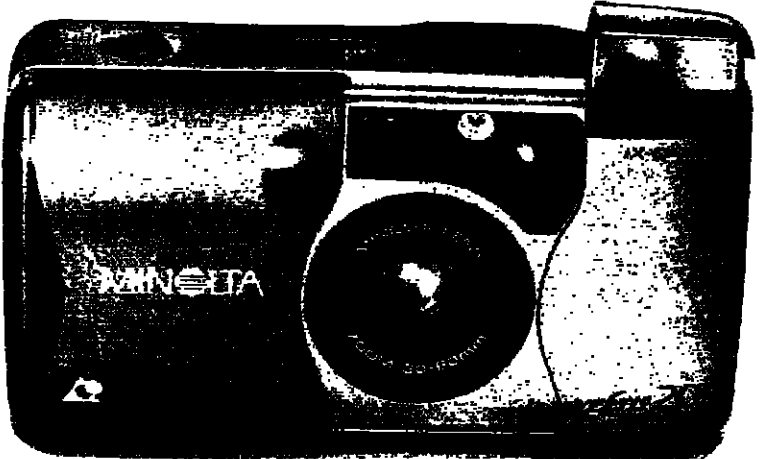
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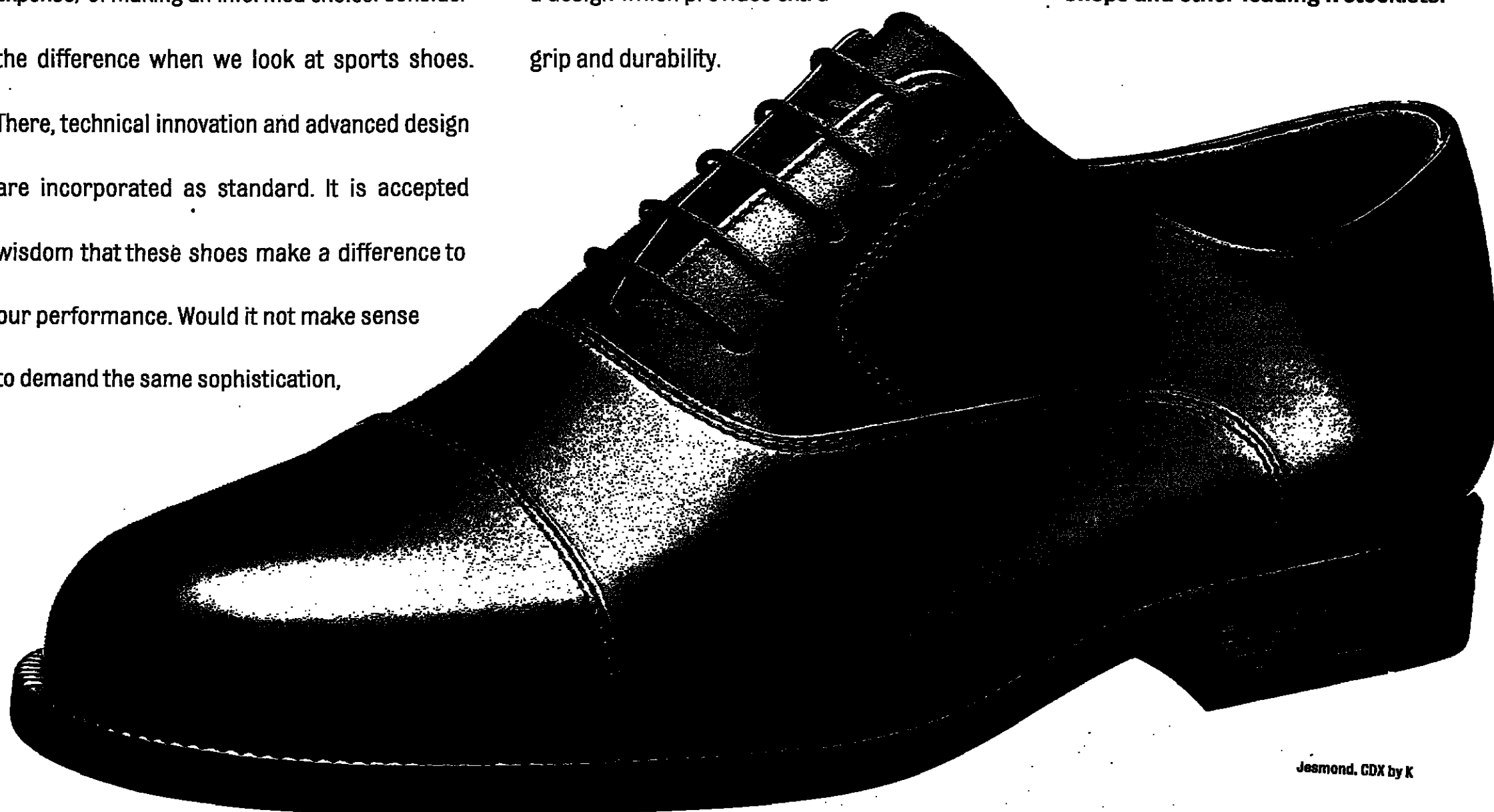


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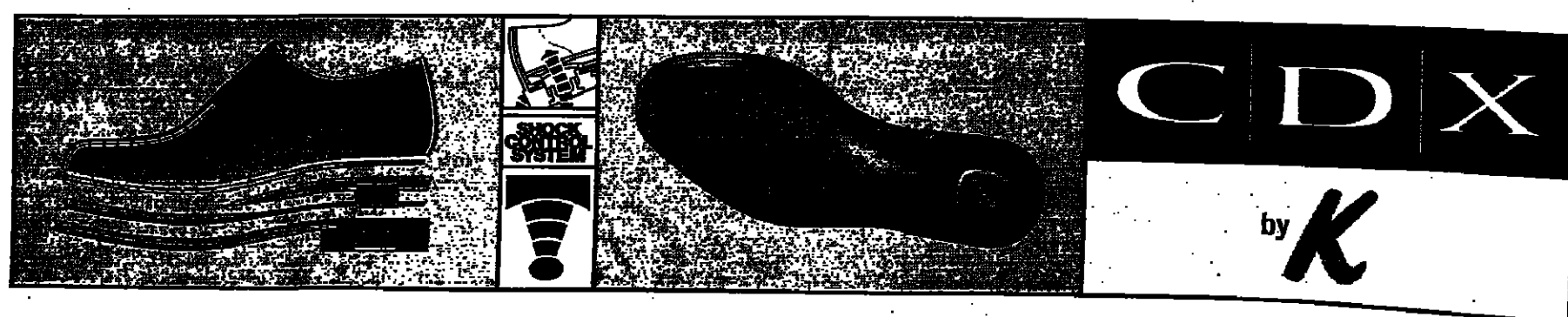


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Parents to take selection battle to the polls



Missed out: Rebecca Barnard and her parents Mark and Kate walk past Graveney school, which is just 200 yards from their home. Photograph: Rui Xavier

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

A GROUP of parents will stand against Labour councillors in the May local government elections in protest against the Government's decision to allow schools to select a proportion of pupils by ability.

Parents in the London borough of Wandsworth say that children there are being damaged because they may have to take as many as seven tests to secure a school place. Some children of even average ability have no chance of a place at their local school.

All 10 Wandsworth secondary schools require pupils to take either a test or to be interviewed because they operate some form of selection. Two are church schools which select by interview and three have a banding system and take 20 per cent of children from each of five ability bands. The rest use tests to select some pupils by aptitude of ability.

Legislation now before the Commons will allow such partial selection to continue. All schools will be able to select up to 10 per cent of their pupils for special aptitude, for example in music or art. Parents in areas

such as Hertfordshire and the London borough of Bromley have already protested against partial selection policies, introduced by the last government, which allow schools to select up to 50 per cent of pupils. Ministers say that, under the Bill, local adjudicators on admissions will be able to stop partial selection if parents complain that it is causing chaos.

Caroline Holden, one of eight Wandsworth parents who intends to stand for election, said: "My 10-year-old son is dyslexic and will be applying to secondary school next year. I have to decide whether to enter him for these tests knowing that his confidence and morale will plummet."

Mrs Holden can see one of the borough's most popular schools, Graveney, from her house but fears that her son will have no chance of getting in. Half of the pupils are selected by ability and this year the remaining places were taken up by children who already have siblings at the school.

Mark Barnard's daughter, Rebecca, 11, lives about 200 yards from the school, but did not pass the test. "We are pretty annoyed. We moved here from Lambeth because of the educa-

tion." Now Rebecca, who took tests for five different schools, will have to take two buses to reach Chestnut Grove school.

Sarah Forester, whose son, Jim, passed the test for Graveney this year, says the admissions process was so traumatic that she wants to protect other children from the experience. "It is really abusive of children. I took a conscious decision not to put him in for too many tests. He did three and passed them all but some children do six tests and still have no school place at the end of it. You are not guaranteed a place in any school."

"Jim is a changed child since he passed the test. He has been so unhappy. He showed no interest in his friends or out-of-school activities. He was very easily upset."

Don Foster, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesman, says comments in December by David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, in the Commons that "part of our admissions policy will remove partial selection where it exists" contradict the Bill.

"The Government has done a massive U-turn on this. The situation in Wandsworth is a disgrace."

Families seek an end to CJD torment

Charles Arthur, Science Editor,
reports as the BSE Inquiry begins

FOR Terry and Shirley Warne, the public hearings of the BSE Inquiry, which start today in London, can't come soon enough. Ever since they began noticing something was awry with their 36-year-old son Christopher in January 1997, they have been pulled into the whirlpool of self-doubt and confusion that has affected all 23 families who have lost members to "new variant" Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (v-CJD) - caused by eating BSE-infected food.

"It's like a torment," said Mrs Warne. "You ask yourself again and again how it happened. A woman came down from the Edinburgh Surveillance Unit [which gathers case histories]. She asked questions for two-and-a-half hours about what he had eaten and what he had done, right from the age of five."

The beginning of the public part of the inquiry may help to lay those demons, which is why the Warnes travelled down at the weekend from their home in Ripley, Derbyshire, to a hotel in the Elephant and Castle, close to the hearings at Hercules House, near Lambeth North Underground station.

Today, at the first hearing, David Body - the solicitor representing the families - will make a statement on their behalf. The inquiry's chairman,

Lord Justice Phillips, has asked one of the families and their GP to give a statement on Tuesday about the impact the disease has had on them.

For the Warnes, it was a sudden descent from having a son who was a health fanatic, to someone who could no longer walk unaided. "January last year was our 40th wedding anniversary... Chris said he was feeling cold along one side of his body. He went upstairs and got down a duvet and sat wrapped up in it."

Then Mrs Warne found that he had begun sleeping on the floor, and then that he was becoming forgetful; and then that he had lost his job of three years as a senior systems analyst at Sky TV in Edinburgh. "They said he just sat and stared at the screen."

On 31 July Chris was hospitalised; on 20 October, at 4.15pm, he died.

The Warnes' main hope is that the inquiry will establish something. Sometimes Mrs Warne looks at a diary Chris kept as a student in Surrey: he used to cook chillis, with cheap mince, the sort known to have probably contained mechanically recovered meat with the most infectious particles.

"But all his friends ate the same thing," Mrs Warne says. "Why haven't they got it?" It's a question which may be beyond the reach of any inquiry.

100 million visit royal website

THE official Buckingham Palace website was visited more than 100 million times in its first year, making it one of the most popular sites world-wide on the Internet.

There were 35 million visits to the royal website during the week of Diana, Princess of Wales's funeral and 600,000 people sent electronic messages of condolence.

During its first 12 months, the website - www.royal.gov.uk - has been expanded from its initial 150 pages to more than 400, including many pictures.

Plans are now being developed to launch an electronic picture gallery on the Internet to display works of art in the Royal Collection.

The palace website is most popular in the United Kingdom and also in North America, Europe, the Far East and South America, notably in Brazil.

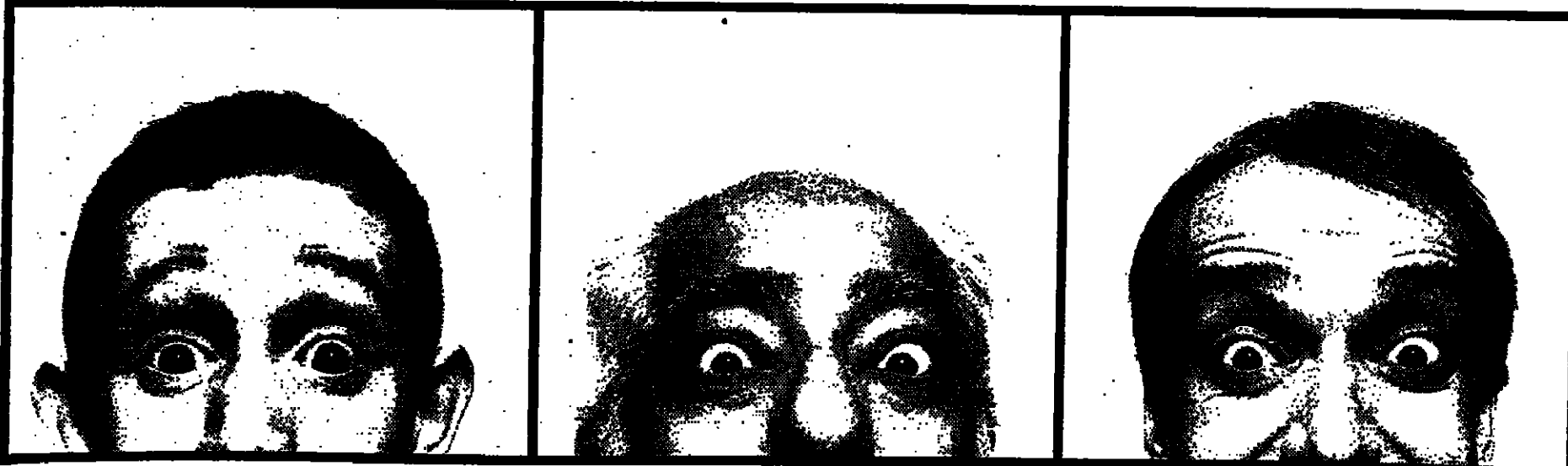
E-mailers are continuing to send messages of sympathy to Prince William and Prince Harry, writing about their personal reaction to their mother's death and also asking after the teenage princes' welfare.

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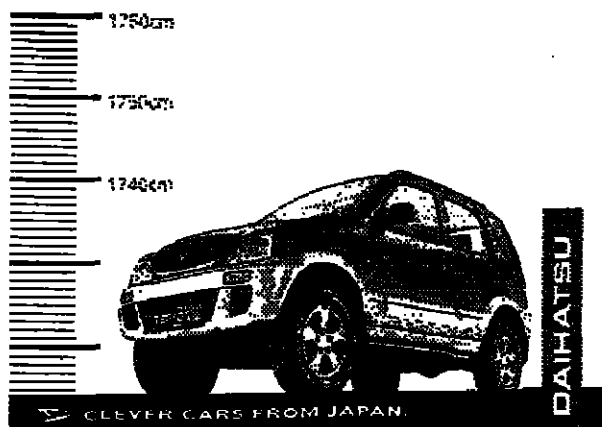
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THE INDEPENDENT
MONDAY 9 MARCH 1998

8/POLITICS

Ministers failing to sell off assets

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

THE Social Security Department is paying more than £1m in commercial rents for empty property but it is one of the Whitehall departments which is accused of dragging its heels in selling surplus assets, which could blow a £5bn hole in the Chancellor's Budget plans.

The Treasury has had a slow response to its demands for all Whitehall departments to identify land and buildings for sale in spite of evidence in a series of Parliamentary questions showing that property worth more than £70m is officially declared as empty. Sales could

have eased the pressure on the Treasury, which is threatening to continue with Tory spending controls for the next three years, virtually doing away with the annual spending round.

The Lord Chancellor's office has included the former Home Office canteen in its list of assets for sale, but there is nothing being identified by Whitehall departments that comes anywhere near the Treasury's hopes for sales, which the Tories estimated to be worth around £2bn a year.

The biggest remaining items for privatisation identified by the Tories before the election – the sale of the air traffic control and the London Underground

– have been put on hold by John Prescott. It is likely he will follow a forthcoming select committee report by seeking commercial freedom for air traffic control to borrow in the commercial market, but is highly unlikely to privatise the service, and he has given a commitment to make sure the Tube remains "publicly accountable and publicly controlled", by bringing in £7bn in private investment to upgrade the system. Mr Prescott favours "sweating" assets to produce more investment, rather than a sell-off.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, ordered Cabinet ministers to draw up a "doomsday

book" of national assets, but that has failed to produce the expected sales which conservative estimates put at £5bn, in spite of the inducement of allowing departments to keep the money if they sales were realised within two years.

Commons written replies to the Liberal Democrat MPs Malcolm Bruce and Norman Baker show a widespread reluctance of ministers to identify assets for sale, or to quantify the money they expect to raise from privatisation.

The Social Security Minister, Frank Field, said: "The amount of commercial rent that is payable on the property that is also vacant for the period 1997-

98 is approximately £1.01m."

His department had identified three benefits offices in Manchester, Todmorden and Eccles for sale but "information about the estimated value of surplus properties and land is commercially confidential".

The Lord Chancellor's office said it had identified a number of court buildings and the former Home Office canteen. It said it was not possible to put a price on the sales. Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, said a number of properties from her department had been sold, and one more was expected to be sold shortly, but she refused to say how much they would raise. The

DTI meanwhile is spending £780,000 a year on empty property and lists the value of its empty property at £3.4m, while public bodies have empty property worth £36m.

The Ministry of Defence, which owns vast tracts of land, insisted on secrecy over the value of its asset sales, although it said it had identified 235 properties and land for disposal.

John Prescott's Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions has identified driving test centres for sale, and a coastguard property at 1 Gordon Road, Lowestoft, with other items, which are expected to raise £2.6m. But it is well short of the hoped-for windfall.

Adams says united Ireland comes later

By David McKelrick
Ireland Correspondent

The Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, yesterday laid out a hardline republican position, demanding among other things disbandment of the RUC and the release of all prisoners.

But at the same he was unusually explicit in stating openly that Sinn Féin did not expect a united Ireland to emerge from the process which, according to the Government's deadline, is due to reach fruition in May.

Sinn Féin is officially entitled, as of today, to re-enter the Stormont multi-party talks, but is expected to stay away until a meeting between Mr Adams and Tony Blair, which may not happen until Thursday.

In an article in the *Ireland on Sunday* newspaper, Mr Adams set out a list of demands which he said "transitional arrangements need as a minimum to achieve".

His inventory included all-Ireland bodies exercising significant executive and harmonising powers with no limit on the nature of extent of their functions.

These should have a remit which would include policing, human rights and the justice system, with an all-Ireland human rights commission, a bill of rights and an all-Ireland constitutional court.

He made only a glancing reference to the possibility of a new

assembly in Northern Ireland, doing so to specify that the proposed all-Ireland bodies should be "immune from its veto."

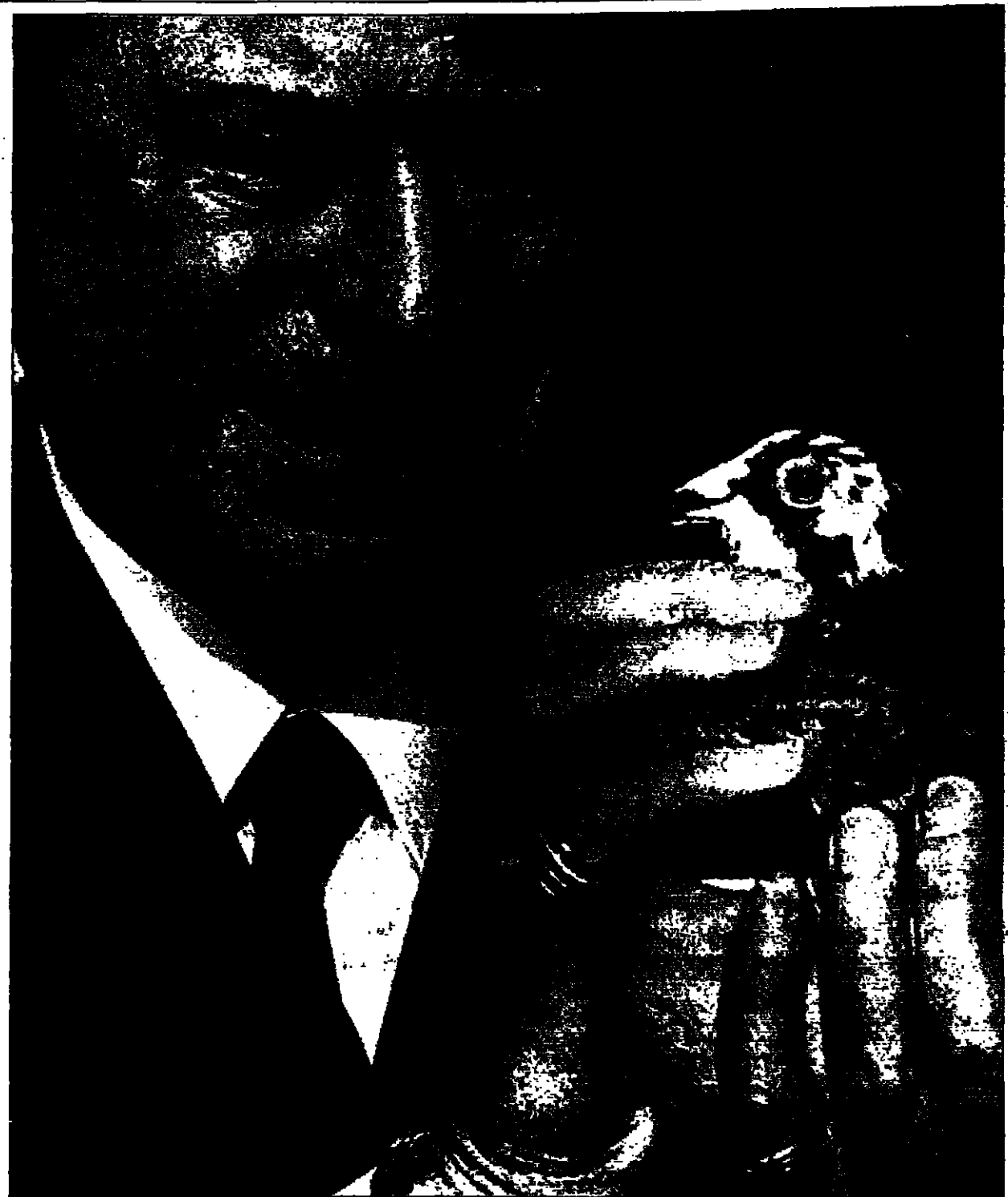
One of the article's central messages appeared to be that any settlement should not close the road to eventual Irish unity but rather contain the potential to advance towards that aspiration. It was dismissed by the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, who, describing it as a republican wish-list, said Sinn Féin's views "are not serious and they are not realistic."

Opinions in other quarters differed on what the article intended to convey. One observer thought it was intended to damage the talks process by demonstrating that the republican agenda set out by it was clearly incompatible with anything Unionists would contemplate.

The unanswered question is how far Sinn Féin is prepared to compromise on its list.

Although the negotiations are entering their final phase in the run-up to May, the demands gave the impression of being more of an opening statement than an unalterable bottom line.

The article does make it very clear, however, that the republicans do not regard the next few months as the period in which a final settlement is worked out. Rather, they view it as just one more phase, albeit an important one, in a process which has many years to run.



Bird in the hand: Tony Banks, the sports minister and a one-time pigeon fancier, holding a bird during a visit to the Ryhope pigeon lofts in Sunderland, which pigeon fanciers want to be given listed status. Photograph: Will Walker

Prescott rounds on 'smear campaign'

By Colin Brown

John Prescott yesterday said he had ordered the permanent secretary at his Whitehall department to conduct an audit on a deal involving his own son to clear his name and show it was all above board.

The Deputy Prime Minister was angry over allegations in the *Observer* that his authority was used to approve a property deal in Hull, where he has his constituency and his home, which could have benefited his eldest son, Jonathan.

Mr Prescott went on to BBC radio to refute the claims, and complained that it seemed that "open season" had been de-

clared on him. Close friends of Mr Prescott said it was part of a smear campaign which had included someone searching through his refuse bin.

The allegations were said to be part of local "mud slinging" by supporters of ex-Labour councillor who had been deselected after allegations surrounding the local authority.

It was alleged that a local housing association sold former council houses worth £20,000 to £30,000 for only £5,000 each after receiving sealed bids from a property company involving Mr Prescott's son.

Mr Prescott took the unusual step of ordering Andrew Turnbull, his permanent secre-

tary at the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, to investigate his own son's involvement in the deal.

Mr Prescott said: "I am absolutely sure there is nothing wrong, but I want the public to be sure that is the case."

A housing trust association offered a number of houses for sale to the council; the council rejected them, and invited tenders for the properties. A company, of which Mr Prescott's son is the contract manager, won the bid. "All that has happened is that he happens to have the name Prescott and this is making for a lot of attention who want to make a particular point."

He also dismissed Tory demands that he should be suspended from the Commons over failing to declare a £27,500 donation to a blind trust. Mr Prescott said he had done nothing wrong in allowing the money to be paid into the fund by the Joseph Rowntree Trust for an independent report by former EU Commissioner for the regions, Bruce Millan, into regional development when Labour was in Opposition.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation last night issued a statement to clear Mr Prescott of any suggestion that the payment of money by the Trust for the research was linked with a change on housing policy.

DAILY POEM

The Corn Husker

By E Pauline Johnson (Telahionwale)

Hard by the Indian lodges, where the bush
Breaks in a clearing, through ill-furnished fields
She comes to labour, when the first still hush
Of autumn follows large and recent yields.

Age in her fingers, hunger in her face,
Her shoulders stooped with weight of work and years,
But rich in tawny colouring of her race,
She comes a-field to strip the purple ears.

And all her thoughts are with the days gone by,
Ere might's injustice banished from their lands
Her people, that to-day unheeded lie,
Like the dead husks that rustle through her hands.

Our poems today and tomorrow come from *Nineteenth-Century American Women Poets*: an anthology, edited by Paula Bernal Bennett (Blackwell, £15.99). E Pauline Johnson was the daughter of a Mohawk chief from Ontario; her Quaker mother was born in Bristol. For 20 years, until her death in 1913, she made her living by reciting her poetry in the United States, Canada and Britain, dressed in Indian costume.

Patients to grade hospital services

NATIONAL Health Service patients will be able to give hospital services the thumbs up, or the thumbs down, in a move to open up the service to more public scrutiny to be announced today by the health minister, Alan Milburn, writes Colin Brown.

The health service's annual reports could come to resemble Thomson holiday brochures, with ratings from their customers under the planned changes.

As well as a national annual survey of patients' experience, Mr Milburn will announce that there will be new ways of involving the public in changes to local health services. He believes options such as opinion surveys and citizens' juries – in which patients would have a direct say

in decisions – must be more widely used.

He will tell the Greater London Association of Community Health Councils, which represents patients, that consultation documents need to be more "user-friendly" and more widely available. Mr Milburn will also tell the conference that "restoring public confidence is the key to modernising the NHS. Consultation on service changes like spending plans and hospital reorganisations needs to be more imaginative."

An independent panel will be set up to reassure the public that ministers will receive independent clinical advice on the quality and safety of controversial changes to health services.

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A high note in the Alps: Julie Andrews (below, right) and (above) as Maria in the 1965 film *The Sound of Music*

Photograph below: Jean Cummings

'Sound of Music' star may never sing again after throat problems

By Kathy Marks

ONCE she set the hills alive with the sound of music. Now Julie Andrews, star of the celebrated 1960s film, may never sing in public again.

Throat problems forced Ms Andrews to pull out of the lead role in the Broadway hit musical *Victor/Victoria* last year. According to reports yesterday, she then elected to have surgery to remove benign nodules in her throat, rather than giving her voice a rest.

But scar tissue on her vocal chords has failed to heal properly and friends say that, while she has regained the ability to speak, she has been warned by

doctors to refrain from singing.

Last week Ms Andrews, 62, left New York to spend time at her home in Gstaad, Switzerland. She reportedly hopes that the clean, bracing air of the Alps - setting for her role as Maria von Trapp, the singing nun in *The Sound of Music* - will help to restore her voice to its former glory.

Her role as the cross-dressing cabaret singer in *Victor/Victoria* was a long-awaited opportunity to return to Broadway, three decades after she became an international star with *The Sound of Music* and *Mary Poppins*, for which she won an Oscar.

The show, created by her

husband, film director Blake Edwards, received rave reviews when it opened in 1995.

However, a demanding role and a punishing schedule took their toll, and Ms Andrews missed a number of performances last year because of sore throats, coughs and laryngitis. When she finally withdrew, her part was taken over by Raquel Welch.

Ms Andrews, originally from Surrey, is said to be doing daily throat exercises and to be convinced that she will regain her vocal powers. She reportedly tells friends: "I got through the Blitz and if I could do that, I can get back my singing voice."



Children face worst risk from passive smoking

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

CHILDREN are at greatest risk from passive smoking, a report by a government expert advisory committee is expected to reveal this week.

The report, by the Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health, to be published on Thursday, will add to the woes of the beleaguered tobacco industry. It is expected to strengthen demands for a ban on smoking in public places.

The evidence of the damaging effects of passive smoking is strongest in children. Those whose parents are smokers have higher rates of cot death, pneumonia and bronchitis, respiratory illnesses and middle ear infections.

Last October, a review of research published in the *British Medical Journal* suggested that non-smokers who lived with a smoker increased their risk of lung cancer and heart disease by a quarter.

Experts yesterday dismissed claims that a World Health Or-

ganisation report into the links between passive smoking and cancer had been suppressed after it failed to show any association. They said the report, leaked to a Sunday newspaper, had been submitted for publication to a medical journal and it was to be expected, statistically, that of the many studies into passive smoking and cancer, some would not show a link.

According to the *Sunday Telegraph*, the 12-centre, seven-country European study had compared 650 lung cancer patients with 1,542 healthy people and examined those who were married to, worked with or grew up with smokers. The results suggested that living with a smoker posed no additional risk and could even be protective against cancer.

Professor Gordon McVie, one of the country's leading cancer experts and the Director General of the Cancer Research Campaign, said yesterday that the interpretation of the WHO report was "highly misleading".

"I have seen the report and

the figures of relative risk given are bang in line with the last ten passive smoking studies.

"The weight of the statistics show that there is more likely to be an effect than not to be an effect, the risk is a small one but the evidence certainly does not prove that no risk is present."

Clive Bates, director of the anti-smoking pressure group Ash, said the claim that the report had been suppressed was ludicrous since the researchers had submitted it to a journal and, like all researchers, were reluctant to talk about it in advance of publication. He said: "The tobacco industry are trying to muddy the water ahead of what is going to be a nightmare week for them."

Dr Martin Jarvis, of University College, London, and a member of the advisory committee, refused to say what would be in the committee's report, but added that if the WHO findings had been correctly reported, they did not destroy the link between passive smoking and cancer.

Motor racing chiefs sent fresh evidence on adverts

FORMULA ONE motor racing chiefs are studying evidence from the Government aimed at persuading them to ban tobacco sponsorship in their sport.

The Department of Health has sent evidence to the sport's governing body, the FIA, indicating a link between advertising and smoking. The move follows the offer by Max Mosley, FIA president, to bring in a ban if a link could be proved.

A voluntary ban on the £200m sponsorship and advertising on Formula One cars could be in place by 2002 - well

ahead of the October 2006 deadline set by the European Union for a halt to tobacco sponsorship.

Health officials have compiled a dossier reviewing research from around the world into tobacco advertising and smoking. It includes a report compiled by Professor Clive Smeed, chief economic adviser to the Department of Health, in 1992, which said advertising bans in other countries were followed by a fall in smoking which could not reasonably be attributed to other factors.

The package also includes a response from the Royal Society - not previously seen - which said that the broad conclusion that there was a 5 to 10 per cent drop in the four countries studied seemed reasonable.

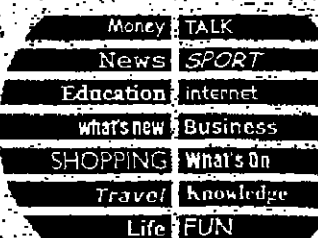
Other documents were from the International Union Against Cancer, Norway's National Council on Tobacco and Health, plus Action on Smoking and Health. It was understood that health officials now hope that the FIA will make good its offer, which would be welcome to the Government.

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Civil defence plans may be adapted for Millennium Bug

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

CIVIL DEFENCE plans to guarantee vital supplies like water, gas and electricity to the emergency services could be adapted to deal with a "Millennium Bug" computer crisis at the end of next year.

Don Cruickshank, head of the government-backed Action 2000 and director general of OfTel, told *The Independent* yesterday that he had expanded his terms of reference to include contingency planning for business. In addition to offering advice to companies on how to deal with the problem, he was also working on plans for a "public service non-destruction programme" - ensuring basic services for the public.

"In part, it is to give business confidence," he said, "but in part, it is to put in place some real procedures." He said that



Cruickshank: Contingency plans for computer crisis

if a company had to be certain of electricity or other basic services, it might think of providing its own generator back-up. "Another thing they might do is to enter into alternative temporary contracts with the local electricity distributor. London

Electricity already has plans in the event of big power failures to prioritise supply of electricity to certain organisations; that has meant that you never let the hospitals down... But that might be adapted to cater for this [Millennium Bug] problem."

A contingency "workshop" is being set up later this month, with 120 representatives from the utilities and large public bodies like the Civil Aviation Authority, the Association of Train Operating Companies and the BBC, along with key Departments like Social Security, to make sure the basic infrastructure of society is maintained.

Mr Cruickshank said that the DSS wanted to be assured that it would have electricity and telecommunications working, "and a lot of the private-sector economy wants to make sure that the benefits-payment system keeps ploughing cash into the economy, and doesn't stop".

One of the problems faced by companies is the unknown threat posed by embedded computer chips. An Action 2000 brochure says: "Depending on the function of the embedded system, the potential consequences of failure could range from trivial to disruption to danger."

"To use an example of a car engine management system, the car could either permanently indicate that it needs a service (trivial), may not start (disruption), or may not stop, or stop unexpectedly (danger)."

Business, he warned, would be negligent if they assumed that any breakdowns would be trivial. "Prudent businesses are not going to take that risk," Mr Cruickshank said. Action 2000 Millennium Bug campaign advice and guidance can be found on a hotline number, 0845 601 2000, and a website at www.bug2000.gov.uk. Tax break, page 21

Boy in flames saved by friend aged 10

A BOY aged 10 was yesterday praised for his actions after he used his first aid training to save a 12-year-old friend who accidentally set himself alight with petrol he drained from an abandoned motorcycle.

Paul Anderson pushed his friend, Quinn Jones, on to the ground and put out the flames with grass and his bare hands after the incident in Saltash, east Cornwall.

Quinn's mother, Sylvia, was at her son's bedside at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, yesterday where he is being treated for 30 per cent burns to his head, face, chest and arms. A hospital spokesman said Quinn, a pupil at Saltash Community College, was "poorly but stable" in the intensive care unit.

His stepfather, Philip Woot-

ton, yesterday paid tribute to Paul saying: "If it was not for him the boy would have died, he was well on fire. The burns are going to require a lot of skin grafts. Not many patches of his skin are not burnt."

But Paul, a pupil at Brunel County Primary School, Saltash - where he has taken two first aid courses - said: "I just think I did the right thing. I put green grass on his legs because I knew it would not light, and quickly patted out the other flames with my hands. It all took about 60 seconds."

Darren Gibson, spokesman for West Country ambulance service, said Paul's quick action saved Quinn from more severe burns and added: "It must have been very frightening, but he did exactly the right thing."

Drug firm issues alert over acne treatment

By Jeremy Laurence

MANUFACTURERS of one of the most effective drugs for severe acne introduced in the past two decades have added a new warning that it may increase the risk of suicide and depression. The warning comes after reports in the US linking the drug isotretinoin with suicide. However, Roche, which makes the drug, says the labelling will be changed only in America.

Isotretinoin is a vitamin A derivative which has been used by more than 8 million people and is sold in the UK as Roaccutane. The new warning will now read: "Isotretinoin may cause depression, psychosis, and rarely suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and suicide."

The change to the American

labelling was agreed with the US Food and Drug Administration although the FDA did not say how many suicides had been linked with the drug. It said it was more concerned about 20 to 24 cases in which a patient's mental state improved when taken off therapy and worsened when therapy re-started. "To us that's an important clue," a spokesman said.

He added that there were suggestions that high doses of vitamin A may be linked with mood disorder.

Roaccutane is the last line treatment for acne when all other treatments, such as antibiotics, have failed. It may only be prescribed by consultants in the UK and can be toxic to the liver, for which patients must be monitored.

SPY 100.1520

Fleeing villagers tell of Serb slaughter

By Andrew Gumbel
in Prekaz, Kosovo

THEY appeared on the crest of the hill above Nikosnica, huddled together in their torn, ragged clothes, faces creased up with anxiety and blinking nervously in the sharp midday sun.

There were about 30, a few women, lots of children, but not a single man - crammed into a trailer-tractor that bumped and weaved its way along the rutted farm tracks out of Prekaz, one of the Albanian villages that has been under attack from Serbian forces for the past three days. "We hid in the basement of a house in the Jashari compound for two days and two nights while the police bombed the buildings around us," said an unemployed teacher who did not give her name.

"There are women and children who were burnt alive in those houses. Then the police moved in and began shooting everything they could see. They even shot the cows. They shot every man over the age of 15 that they could find."

The Jashari family were known as a militant rural clan, opposed to the police state the Serbs have built up in this Albanian-dominated province. Now they appear to all intend and purposes to have been liquidated.

The Serb authorities boasted at the weekend that they had killed Adem Jashari, whom they described as a commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the organisation that has claimed responsibility for the murders of several dozen Serb policemen and Albanian informers over the past year.

According to the Albanians, Adem was still alive. But 20 members of his family - his father, brothers, nephews and a few of the women - have been reported killed. It seems the Jashari menfolk put up a fight, but according to the village teacher and other refugees from Prekaz, much of the rest of the village came under unprovoked attack. From the confused descriptions by witnesses, it seems the police used armoured personnel carriers and mortars to blast their way into the village.

"There must be 10 or 15 houses burnt to the ground. The

dead and wounded are lying in the street, unable to get help," the teacher said. "We thought if we stayed, put the fighting would stop. But when the explosions began again this morning, we tried to leave. My husband ran into the woods because he knew he would be slaughtered if he showed his face. We walked out of the village trembling with fear. The police let us through, but as soon as we had left they began firing their guns towards us."

Other refugees have described how the Serbian police, many of them in masks, were combing the woods to hunt down the villagers who were still alive. They said one member of the Jashari family, Beshkim, had hidden overnight in a freezing river to escape detection. It was not clear if he was still alive.

Over the weekend, coachloads of police reinforcements were seen heading into Kosovo and along the road linking Pristina, the capital, with Mitrovica, just north of the combat zone, where many of the refugees have fled.

Around Prekaz, the security forces established a ring of jeeps and armoured vehicles on the hilltops to prevent anyone, including the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations, from getting in. From the hill above Nikosnica, it was possible to see the rooftops of Prekaz. Plumes of black smoke billowed over the crest of the hill.

It is hard to predict how long this onslaught will go on for. The Serbs told Western diplomats visiting Pristina on Friday that "anti-terrorist operation" would wind down over the weekend.

Instead, the attacks intensified as soon as the ambassadors left for Belgrade. Police sources predicted the conflict continuing for a week, or until 22 March, when the Albanians had planned to hold unofficial elections independent of the Serbs.

The police strategy that is emerging is a dragnet throughout the rural Drenica region west of Pristina. Prekaz, on the outer edge of Drenica, appears nearly dealt with. Fighting in Laushe, a few miles down the road to the south-west, is still reported to be intense. Over the weekend, police were moving in



An armed Serbian policeman on patrol in the village of Prekaz. Refugees claimed women and children were burnt alive in their homes. Photograph: Reuters

on Srbica, further still to the west.

The only way to visit Drenica is along dirt tracks far from the main roads. The region is full of destroyed houses and walls bearing the marks of bullet holes and artillery shells. Most date back to the 1980s, or even further - a reminder that Drenica has for decades been a hotbed of tension between Albanians and the Serbs.

If it is true, as the Serbs claim, that the Albanians are organising an armed revolt in Drenica, it was hard to find evidence of any military response to the onslaught on the villages.

We were met by two young Albanian men in a blue Opel Ascona with radio equipment above the dashboard. We were told they were members of the Kosovo Liberation Army. If they were armed, they did not show their weapons or give any indication they were part of a militia.

Their main concern appeared to be to find a breach in the ring of police around Prekaz so the dead and wounded could be evacuated. Given that the Serbs have APCs and tanks waiting in barracks in Pristina, the JLA hardware does not inspire fear so much as pity.

BIG POWERS TELL MILOSEVIC TO NEGOTIATE

Foreign ministers of the six-nation Contact Group are expected to warn the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, against pursuing a bloody crackdown in Kosovo. The powers, meeting in London today, are expected to underline the need for outside mediation but are unlikely to agree on economic sanctions or military intervention.

The meeting marks the first time the foreign ministers of the US, Britain, France, Germany and Russia have held an emergency session on former Yugoslavia since the 1995 Dayton peace accords on Bosnia. However, Russia opposes any talk of sanctions, and the Foreign Minister, Yegor Prizakov, is not attending today. Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary, said: "I will want to send a clear

message ... that the repression should stop."

Madeline Albright, US Secretary of State, toured Western Europe at the weekend, seeking support for economic and diplomatic measures to press Mr Milosevic to negotiate with moderate leaders of the ethnic Albanian majority on restoring autonomy to Kosovo.

The big powers will press Mr Milosevic to accept a mediation mission by the former Spanish prime minister Felipe Gonzalez on behalf of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Western governments fear the conflict may draw in neighbouring Albania and Macedonia, which has a restive Albanian minority. — Reuters, London

Minor addition to Great Lakes

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

CHILDREN at schools throughout America will have to learn a new answer to one of the most elementary questions of national geography: how many Great Lakes are there? Last week, there were five, Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario. Now, according to a Bill signed into law by President Clinton, there are six. Lake Champlain, the long, thin lake that divides the state of New York from the state of Vermont, has been elevated to the status of a Great Lake.

Not everyone is happy. Congressmen from the original Great Lake states are foremost among the critics. Lobbying against the change, Steven LaTourette, a Republican member of the House of Representatives from Ohio, said if Lake Champlain ended up as a Great Lake, "I propose we rename it 'Lake Plain Sham'."

Mr LaTourette is co-chairman of the congressional Great Lakes task force, entrusted with overseeing management of and funding for the lakes.

Lake Champlain, said one television commentator, is "an ice-age mud puddle that doesn't even appear on some maps".

The critics have a point. Lake Champlain is less than one-tenth of the size of the smallest Great Lake, Lake Ontario, 490sq miles compared to 7,420sq miles. It is not even attached to the Great Lakes system.

The nub of the issue, as so often, is politics, and money. The designation "Great Lake" brings with it the chance to compete for large sums of federal funding. The possibility was spotted by a Vermont Senator, Patrick Leahy, a Democrat, who managed to have "his" lake's eligibility inserted into the Bill at a late stage.

The Great Lakes states understandably fear any money spent on Lake Champlain will mean less money for them.

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Suharto snubs IMF's plan to save Indonesia

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Jakarta

INDONESIA faced the threat of more economic turmoil yesterday after President Suharto suggested he might reject the IMF \$43bn (£27bn) rescue plan. The announcement brings into the open a worsening confrontation between Indonesia and the International Monetary Fund, and is likely to lead to turmoil on the international currency markets, where the Indonesian rupiah has lost 70 per cent of its value since last summer. As a result, the price of food and imported goods has shot up, companies have gone bankrupt, and unemployment has risen, provoking riots, protests and demonstrations. President Suharto told Indonesian MPs that the IMF's

insistence on opening up Indonesia's highly regulated and protected economy to foreign competition contradicted the constitution, a vague document which has been used before to justify the President's personal decisions. "He [Suharto] said the IMF package and the IMF requests are aiming for a liberal economy, which did not agree with article 33," said Yusuf Syakir, a party leader who was visiting the President in advance of his expected re-election tomorrow. "The article says Indonesia's economy should be arranged and managed by a family system," he added. The statement came at the end of a tense week, in which a succession of Western visitors tried to persuade Indonesia's strongman to abide by the IMF

agreement. The weekend before, President Suharto gave a speech complaining that the IMF plan was not working. The IMF programme would involve banking reforms, cuts to public spending and the abolition of monopolies and cartels, many of which are run by the Suharto family. "The President told me they were committed to the programme and I hope that is the case," said British foreign office minister Derek Fatchett after meeting the President and presenting a letter from Tony Blair. At the end of the week, the Indonesian finance minister, Mar'ie Muhammad made a veiled threat, suggesting any delay in IMF payments to Indonesia could have a "negative effect" on other South East Asian currencies. In spite of the

threat, the IMF on Saturday said the next installment of \$3bn would not be made before April. The IMF plan aims to modernise and increase the efficiency of the Indonesian economy. But, like similar programmes in Thailand and South Korea, it would entail hardship, including bankruptcies and higher prices for previously subsidised foodstuffs. The Suharto government fears the effect of these price increases on the country's restive 200 million people. It appears to have decided that the short-term cost of the IMF plan outweighs the long-term benefits. Without the support of the IMF, the rupiah is likely to fall further, intensifying pressure on Indonesian banks and businesses.



Colour coded: Greens party leader Joschka Fischer adjusts party colleague Joerg Huetter's hair on the last day of the Alliance 90/Greens congress in Germany, where they prepared for September elections. Photograph: Andreas Altner/SPA

Georgia fears the assassins from Russia

By Phil Reeves
in Tbilisi

IT IS a deliberate slap in the face. As soon as Russians arrive at Georgia's new international airport, gateway to territory over which Moscow held sway for centuries, they cannot but notice the absence of signs in their language.

Time was when millions of Soviet holidaymakers came each year to this vivacious, wine-quaffing Caucasian republic to seek relief from the tedium of serving the Communist empire. You wouldn't know it now.

Like the Hollywood sign, the words "British Airways" in 14ft-high letters adorn a hillside overlooking Tbilisi's sprawl. A Greyhound bus, in the ghostly livery of L&M cigarettes cruises the capital promising to deliver the "spirit of America". Though Russian will long be widely spoken here, Georgian and English script dominates. Nearly seven years after declaring independence, Georgia is loosening its bonds with Russia with fresh determination.

Its attitude to its neighbour will always be ambivalent - the conflicting impulses of a small nation which looks north to its Christian brothers and trading partners for protection, but which also nurses pro-Western impulses and a passionate sense of independence.

But now the scales have tilted anew. Someone is trying very hard to kill their President, the former Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze. And the Georgians blame the Russians. They point an accusing finger at regressive elements in the Russian army and other power structures who despise Mr Shevardnadze for his contribution to the collapse of the USSR, and who are determined to ensure no other power fills the resulting vacuum in the Caucasus.

Georgia believes these murky forces lay behind a group of gunmen who blasted Mr Shevardnadze's motorcade with rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire last month. Had it succeeded, the damage would have gone far beyond this particular patch of land, between the Caspian and the Black Sea.

Mr Shevardnadze, 70, has no obvious successor. "Killing one man would change the whole political climate in the Transcaucasus," says Alex Rondelli, director of the Foreign Policy Research and Analysis Centre in Tbilisi.

Several days earlier, a bomb was found in a stadium where his close ally and neighbour, Haidar Aliyev, president of Azerbaijan, was expected. Had either attack succeeded, the entire Caucasus would have been destabilised.

Western sources confirm the chief suspect - the president's former secret services chief, Igor Giorgadze - fled by aeroplane from one of Russia's four military bases in Georgia. He is believed to be in Moscow, but Tbilisi's efforts to extradite him have foundered.

Georgians officials say any

efforts to co-operate by the Kremlin are scuppered by reactionary forces intent on keeping the Caucasus divided. "The concept is to create controlled chaos to maintain Russia's influence," said Peter Mamradze, an aide to the Georgian president.

Georgia appears certain to be chosen as the corridor through which the bulk of Azerbaijan's huge supplies of Caspian oil will be piped out to international markets, much of it via Turkey. A formal decision is expected by the end of the year. Suspicions abound that the attack was an attempt to undermine the Georgian route.

Big geo-political issues are at stake. The West wants the oil to flow freely, safe from potential meddling from Moscow.

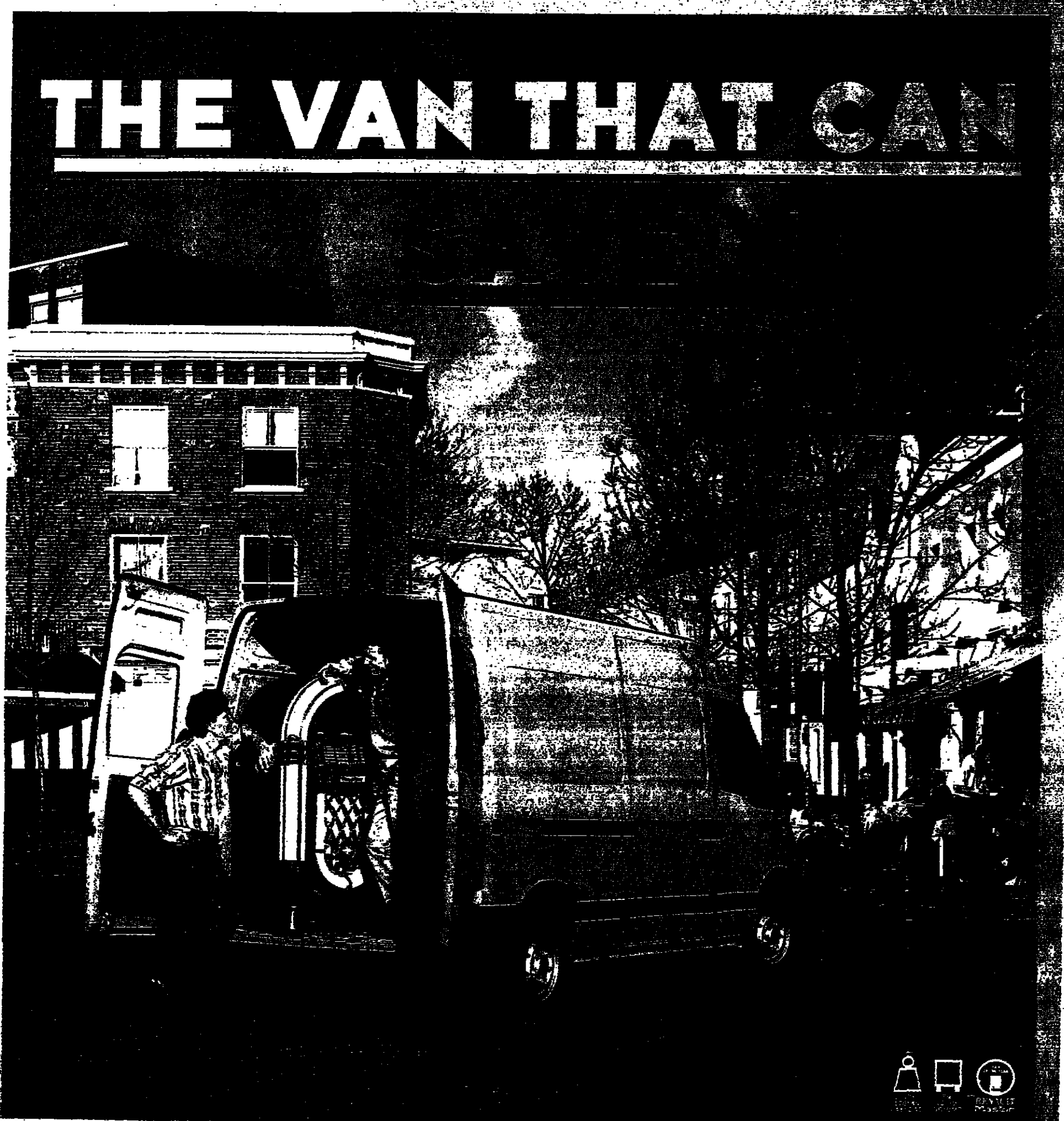


The survivor: Eduard Shevardnadze

an objective which it combines with the long-term goal of blocking any expansionist ambitions in Russia. Their oil giants, including BP, have much to lose, having secured a large footing in the consortia extracting Azeri oil. While Washington watches over the territory with keen self-interest, so do the three powers that lap at the region's edges - Turkey, Russia and Iran.

But a stronger buttress to Georgia's independence has emerged in the guise of an alliance between Messers Shevardnadze and Aliyev, who is five years his senior. The two wily septuagenarians have much in common. Both were head of their republic's security services (Aliyev ran his republic's KGB); both belonged to the Soviet Politburo. When Mr Shevardnadze escaped from last month's attack, Mr Aliyev was on the phone in half an hour with assurances that - no matter what the terrorists did - Georgia would get the pipeline.

But one Western source warned: "The attack on Mr Shevardnadze was well financed and well organised. It will probably happen again - sooner rather than later."



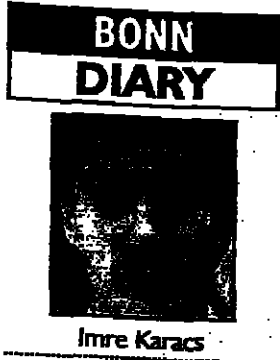
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طريق من الدمام

The ultimate legal machine — stunt-kids on bikes make drivers pay

A FRIEND'S six-year-old daughter was run over by a bicycle. Her arm was fractured in three places; the operation has left a big scar. My friend is aggrieved — by the suffering of his child, as well as by the legal complications that have ensued. The cyclist, though unhurt, is claiming to have sustained grave financial injury and is suing for DM350 — just under £120.

You may think he is callous, but Germans can react quite irrationally to their vehicles — however rudimentary — being damaged. I was once at the receiving end of a verbal assault



Imre Karacs

by a normally mild neighbour who claimed our cat had scratched the bonnet of his BMW. Another friend had an unpleasant encounter with a

driver who had just run over his eight-year old son. The irate motorist thought it only fair that the parent should pick up the tab for the bump on his bumper.

How nice to see the tables turned on litigious German drivers. The latest scheme by a Bosnian refugee reverses the plot, sending children on bikes into the path of expensive cars. These stunt-kids are masters of feigning injury without suffering a knock. The driver knows that in the court-room any dispute is settled in accordance with the "two wheels good, four wheels bad" principle. The motorists pay the

Bosnians without a murmur, usually on the spot.

The ferries that ply their trade across the Rhine display their "house rule" proudly, like all German institutions. They run to three crowded pages. Ignore them at your peril.

On a windy Saturday evening we took the boat across, sheltering in the small passenger compartment. To keep warm, we took to tap-dancing — as one does on the Rhine ferry — much to the amusement of a young couple driven inside by the gales. It was just them and us, and, we discovered, the of-

ficial watching us on camera. He did not interrupt, but we do not think he approved because of what followed. Our downfall was our daughter Sarah, who had apparently failed to adopt the regulation posture while doing in a corner. "Foot off the bench!" bellowed the anonymous watchman through the loudspeaker. We are now educating Sarah on the etiquette of crossing the river, and mugging up on Fred & Ginger movies for our next trip.

For a company town about to lose its main employer, Bonn is awfully cheerful. A year from

now, the "federal city" will be deserted by politicians and their expense accounts. One might expect the local economy to be depressed, but apart from anecdotal evidence, Bonn still seems the closest you can get to a German boom town. Bad Godesberg, the posh suburb where most diplomats live in style, has recently acquired a huge multiplex cinema. Work has resumed on the concrete hulk by the Rhine, originally designed as a Bundestag annex but subsequently orphaned by history. As with most other public buildings, the government has found new tenants. And don't think any road pro-

jects drawn up before German reunification have been abandoned. The enormous tunnel built to speed motorcades along the so-called "diplomats' race-track" is beginning to emerge from the rubble. It will be ready on schedule, in the middle of 1999.

We are off to the "property exchange", a sort of real estate milk round. Every few months, Berlin developers take over the town hall for a weekend to show off their wares. We visited them the last time, collected dozens of business cards but have yet to get

a quote. We do not seem to be the type of customer they are looking for. They are after the bureaucrats who want to buy, rather than rent. For them, idyllic water-front settings have been landscaped: a touch of rural bliss in the middle or on the fringes of the urban jungle. Billions of deutschmark have been ventured, and all to no avail. The government is offering incredible packages to entice its employees to Berlin. As well as relocation grants, pay rises and compensation for the higher prices in the new capital, it has agreed even to foot the bill for moving civil servants' horses and yachts.

Club for all nations leaves the empire behind

I GAUGE the "new Commonwealth," there's no need to ruse Foreign Office mission sements, study treaties on human rights, or book tickets the Commonwealth Games Kuala Lumpur.

Just call in at 18 Northumberland Avenue, around the corner from Trafalgar Square, and survey what — to hear some people talk — is the trendiest addition to London clubland since e Garrick started life in 1831.

It is called the Royal Commonwealth Society. Not to be confused with the institution at used to be at that address, so called the Royal Commonwealth Society.

Julian Malone-Lee, manager of the new RCS, is perhaps ver-addicted to the word "unique."

But he has a point. Maybe the London clubs offer 70 malt whiskies and 30 different vodkas, including a couple from Estonia. But none as ever been as totally re-invented as the RCS.

The shabby-genteel institution which went belly-up in 1991, re-opens for Commonwealth Day today, as a stylistic, political and gastronomic emblem of Blair's rebranded Britain.

Take the menu. Gone are the calorie-laden potted hrimps and bread pudding of yesteryear — banished in favour of warm salad of woodpigeon with beetroot crisps, and gateau if pancetta with aubergine.

Rupert Cornwell discovers the new look Royal Commonwealth Society welcomes families and jeans

Healthy and modish fare and, if the dishes taste half as good as they sound, a snip at £50 for two with wine.

"We're trying to make this a club for everyone," said Mr Malone-Lee, lately of the New Cavendish Club, grey-haired and 40 going on 25. "Lots of clubs can be very daunting, but here there are no old ghosts around."

In short, no intimidating ancient retainers, looking askance at every garish tie. Now you won't have to wear a tie at all.

And if you appear in jeans with the children, that's fine, especially on Sunday, when there'll be a family brunch followed by a children's feature film.

The club will offer round-the-clock service, from breakfast through to post-theatre suppers.

"We want to compete with the Ritz, the Waldorf, Fortnum and Mason," Mr Malone-Lee said. "We're going to smoke our

own salmon, and make our own sausages, our own mustard, marmalade, and ice cream on the premises."

And in this slice of franchised Cornran-land, the new Commonwealth will bloom. Its new director, Peter Luff, came to the RCS last December from the European Movement. He sees the two as complementary, not competing, symbols of Britain's destiny.

On to the ardent European has been grafted a no less ardent Commonwealth man: "The Commonwealth is about to happen, as a model, a network, an opportunity for business people and professionals of all countries."

He talks of a "Commonwealth civil society, based on the principle of human rights and good government, from which we can conduct world-wide campaigns on given issues."

It's all terribly new Labour, complete with the obligatory political correctness. Mr Luff has gone out of his way not to upset the 3,000 existing members, who have continued to cough up their subscriptions since 1991 — and one who joined the RCS in 1936 is said to have described the revamped premises as "brilliant".

But success depends on attracting another 1,500-odd young Commonwealth professionals and the NGOs. Minority groups are a priority target, to turn the club into a closer multi-racial reflection of the modern Commonwealth. But women are not — for the simple reason the old RCS was never a male bastion.

"Believe it or not," Mr Luff notes, "we had women members even before women got the vote [in 1919]."

But there the similarities end

with the club that started out in 1868 as the Colonial Society and whose presidents included the future kings Edward VII and George V.

The old RCS boasted a glorious library housed in what might have been a stateroom on the *Titanic*. The new one has an Internet corner.

About the only clue to the past is a cluster of "noble savage" photos in the dining room depicting chiefs and elders from countries once shaded pink on the map.

Will the new club take off? More than 1,000 bookings have been taken for the first week alone.

However, the dazzled visitor leaves also a little confused, wondering how the empire on which the sun never set has metamorphosed into coriander marinated vegetables with poached quail's eggs.



Putting on the glitz: Diners taking in the ambience of the Royal Commonwealth Society, which re-opens today to mark Commonwealth Day
Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Columbia's violent poll

COLOMBIA'S government deployed tens of thousands of soldiers and armed liquor sales ahead of congressional elections being held amid stepped-up rebel attacks and political kidnappings.

President Ernesto Samper called on all those eligible to cast a vote yesterday to protest at one of the most violent weeks in the country's 35-year civil war. Colombians were to choose 102 senators and 161 representatives.

The newly invigorated guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc), claim to have killed 80 soldiers in a remote southern jungle in an effort to derail the elections.

— AP, Bogota

India D-day

THE president of India is likely to invite a leader of the Hindu nationalist party next week to become the country's new prime minister, a newspaper reported. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the former prime minister, was selected at the weekend by his Bharatiya Janata Party, which won the largest number of seats in recent elections. Mr Vajpayee, who was prime minister for 13 days in 1996, could be invited by the President. KR Narayanan, on or before Thursday, the *Asian Age* daily said. — AP, New Delhi

Going home

MOHAMMAD Khatami, the President of Iran, has told embassies to ease the return home of millions of Iranians living abroad and plans a special address to them this month, the English language *Tehran Times* said. Iran witnessed a "brain drain" after the 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the pro-Western monarchy.

— Reuters, Tehran

Tongue-tied

CHINESE surgeons have operated on a man with three tongues, removing two so that he can eat and speak normally for the first time. Xinhua news agency said.

Xian Shihua, 32, a peasant from the south-western province of Sichuan, was born with one tongue, but a second, smaller one grew when he was five years old, and later a third, the agency said. It added: "His largest tongue was 13in long."

Netanyahu seeks British backing for Palestinian deal

by Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, arrived in Britain yesterday with a four-point plan to move forward peace negotiations with the Palestinians. The proposals were hastily drafted on Mr Ne-

tanyahu's flight between Bonn and Oslo, according to the Israeli press.

The daily *Yedioth Aharnon* reported Mr Netanyahu's aides joked on the airplane that the main reason for going to Norway was to "return, officially the Oslo accords to the place from which they came".

Since he became prime minister in 1996 Mr Netanyahu has withdrawn Israeli troops from part of the city of Hebron, but has implemented no other part of the Oslo agreements which he opposed as leader of the opposition.

The Israeli proposals given to Mr Blair may be partly a way

of avoiding sounding too negative about peace and a response to proposals put forward by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, last week.

Mr Cook suggested six steps to revive the peace process. These include a halt to Israeli settlements on the West Bank, a fresh commitment to securi-

ty by the Palestinians, substantial and immediate troop withdrawals by the Israelis and measures to boost the Palestinian economy.

Mr Netanyahu's proposals deal with more detailed issues such as the opening of a Palestinian airport at Gaza and the opening of an industrial park.

He also says he would like to meet Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

Among those who will not be meeting Mr Netanyahu in the near future is King Hassan of Morocco, who had friendly relations with the previous Israeli government.

He is quoted as saying: "I'm

not prepared to meet with this man, with Netanyahu. I watched him on CNN — his body language projects aggression, something violent."

In Israel yesterday 1,500 army and police officers published a letter calling for Mr Netanyahu to choose between peace and settlements.

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It tastes all the better for knowing that the people who grow it don't get ground down and squeezed. **cafédirect** Excellent coffee. A better deal for coffee growers.

TECHNOQUEST

The meaning of Pi/ Plastic bags/ Inertia/ Slugs

Questions for this column may be submitted by e-mail to sci.net@campus.bt.com

Q Is the calculation of pi empirical (by measurement) or theoretical? (asked by Rev John Wilcox)

Pi is a constant – but it is an “irrational” number, meaning it cannot be exactly expressed as the ratio of two numbers. So it can never be completely enumerated, only approximated: it is the sum of an infinite series. But the fact that pi is constant has been known for so long that it is quite untraceable. In very ancient times, 3 was used as the approximate value of pi – almost certainly derived from measurement.

It seems that Archimedes in the 3rd century BC was the first person to make a scientific effort to compute it. By calculating the circumference of a 96-sided polygon, he showed the value was between 223/71 and 227/7 – that is, to 1 per cent accuracy.

The precision of pi has increased steadily throughout history but it wasn't until the introduction of computers this century that pi could be calculated to many decimal places. Nowadays computer algorithms can express it to millions of digits.

Q How are plastic bags made?

All plastic bags, sacks and bigger are made by a process known as “blown film extrusion”, in which the molten plastic is blown up like a balloon as it is stretched out to produce a continuous tube of the film. This film is flattened to make a continuous double layer – which is what makes new bags difficult to open sometimes. This is then printed, and cut to the appropriate length, sealed and a handle is cut out, all in one process which is continuously repeated to produce individual bags.

Q If all the matter in the universe was concentrated into such a small space just after the Big Bang, why didn't gravity just pull it all back together again? Because of inertia. The primordial stuff was flying apart so fast after the inflationary push that gravity could not pull it back instantaneously. If the universe were “closed” then eventually, after all that outward momentum had been used up, gravity would triumph and the universe would close up again. But recent measurements suggest the universe contains only 20 per cent of the matter required to pull it together again, so it will continue expanding forever.

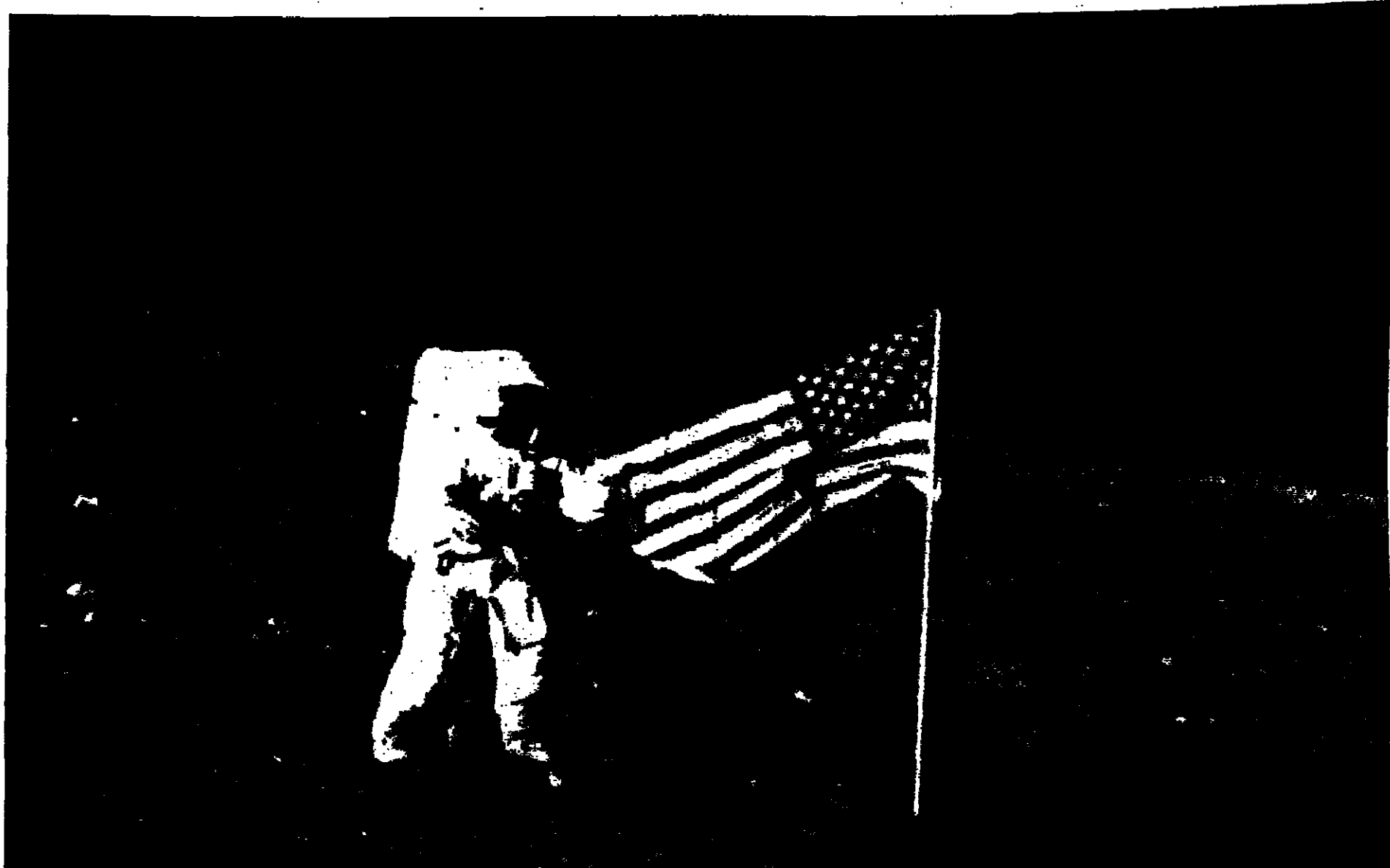
Q How long do slugs live?

The life expectancy of slugs varies greatly, depending on type, size and so on. But in general, very small slugs live about six months, while very large slugs can live for between eight and 10 years.

You can also visit the technoquest World Wide Web site at <http://www.campus.bt.com/CampusWorld/pub/scienceNet>

Questions and answers provided by Science Line's Dial-a-Scientist on 0345 600444

A home from home



One small step: Neil Armstrong plants the US flag on the Moon in 1969. The footprint he left (below) shows the depth of the lunar dust

Photograph: Nasa

Nasa wants to establish a Moon base. But what would it be like to live there? Charles Arthur reports

“Beautiful!” exclaimed Buzz Aldrin, the second man to walk on the Moon, as he stood for the first time in his spacesuit on the lunar surface. “Beautiful!” And then he added, “Magnificent desolation.” After that, he recalls, there was no more time to record impressions: he had to get to work.

Now, it looks like we might be able to take more careful stock of that “magnificent desolation”. The excitement about last week's announcement by the US space agency Nasa, that there is water on the Moon, has infected the space industry. People inside and outside Nasa are talking about hurrying back to the place that we thought we had left for good in December 1972. “Human life could expand to the moon,” said Alan Binder, the jubilant lead scientist for the Lunar Prospector spacecraft, as he revealed the findings.

With water available, he said, it would be possible to start building a moon base in eight to 10 years and have a partially self-supporting colony within 15 years. “We could do it even faster if we pushed it,” Binder said. The water is now

available and the technology can be developed, but there would have to be a national decision to tackle the project.

Certainly, the political fight will be fascinating, at least to politicians. But of more interest to the average person is the question: what's it actually like to live and work on the Moon? Would you be a superhuman? Would you go mad?

Actually, the thing that the astronauts from the six Apollo missions which landed there remember is the dust. Produced by millennia of meteor and comet impacts, it has been ground down into tinter and tinter particles. It's all over the Moon. It's also one of the most annoying things you encounter there.

Eugene Cernan, commander of the last manned Moon mission, Apollo 17, said: “The dust is like graphite, but graphite lubricates, whereas lunar dust makes things stick together. It gets into your space suits... It's so fine it even gets into the pores of your skin. It took me weeks after my return to get rid of the last traces of it.”

It might seem surprising that a \$10m (£6.25m) spacesuit designed to protect against the hostile vacuum and cold of space could let in something from outside. But it's the nature of such fine materials that they behave almost like a fluid, inevitably penetrating the tiniest of flaws. Nobody who doesn't like itching or feeling grimy would be well-advised not to volunteer for the Lunar Laboratory.

However, it takes a few days for the effects of the dust to be

noticeable. By contrast, the first thing that hits any lunar visitor is the peculiar effect of the satellite's size on range estimation.

“We had difficulties in perception of distance,” recalled Neil Armstrong, the man who in July 1969 became the first to walk on the Moon. “For example, from the cockpit of the lunar module we judged our television camera to be only 50 or 60ft away. Yet we knew we had pulled it out to the extent of a 100ft cable.”

Similarly, we had trouble guessing how far the hills on the horizon might be away from us. The peculiar phenomenon is the closeness of the horizon, due to the greater curvature of the Moon's surface – four times greater than the Earth. Also, it's an irregular surface, with crater rims overlying other crater rims.

Added to that is the looming shape of the Earth, which naturally appears far larger in the Moon's sky than vice-versa. Even during the “day” the lu-

nar sky is black (there is nothing to scatter the sun's rays, as on Earth) and Cernan recalled that “you can see stars if you concentrate very hard”.

The real separation comes on the night side, which Cernan orbited: “You are probably in the blackest blackness anyone can imagine. You're out of sight of the Earth, and you can't even see the Moon below you. All you can see are hundreds and hundreds of stars.”

It's once you start moving that the gravity, one-sixth that of Earth, becomes apparent. Armstrong and Aldrin, as the first astronauts, were cautious about moving about. But the later teams became increasingly confident, until they were literally throwing themselves into their work, timing leaps and movements as well as could be expected for people who only spent at most a few days there.

Extended periods on the Moon would certainly take their toll. Even normal bodily functions are complicated by

wearing a spacesuit. How did the Apollo astronauts do it? “With great care,” replied Aldrin. “Seriously, we used bags and hoses and personal wipes. The details are left to the imagination, but there's really nothing gory in the reality. Sort of like a long camping trip, you're glad to have a hot shower at the end.”

That hot shower might be in a permanent lunar base, though it would have to be very solid to withstand small meteor impacts (against a large one, it wouldn't have a chance). It would have to be exceptionally well-insulated, as would the spacesuits used by future Moon explorers prospecting for ice.

The real problem, explains the astronomer Patrick Moore, is that the ice must lie at the bottom of deep craters which never see sunlight – or else it would boil away into the vacuum of space.

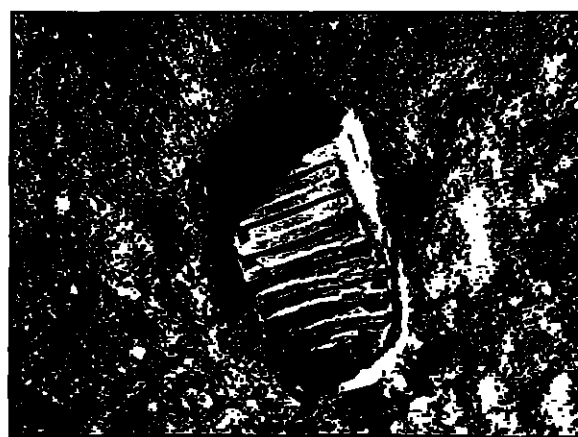
“The walls of the craters are thousands of feet high,” he explains. “That makes it immensely difficult to explore them. The fact that they're at the poles as well, which are very hard to reach, adds to your problems.” While the lunar rover seemed a success, that travelled over comparatively flat, solid ground. Ascending the sides of a lunar crater in temperatures that might be 100 degrees below zero is the sort of task that makes climbing Everest look easy. Though you and your equipment weigh six times less than on Earth, everything has the same inertia as before. Jump, and you'll still have to bear the impact when you land.

And a huge falling rock will still crush you. The crash of the *Mir* space station with its cargo ship last June demonstrates that taking away weight does not remove hazards.

Added to that are the likely health problems of an extended stay. In lower gravity, bones and muscles tend to lose mass, as has been repeatedly demonstrated with occupants of space stations. There might be other, as yet unknown, long-term effects of low gravity.

Furthermore, it's important not to discount the psychological effects of being in a remote place where it's possible you would never see your home planet from one “day” to the next. Scientists on Antarctic missions have recorded how the slightest physical or psychological defect in your companions becomes magnified, and increasingly annoying. While space training can prevent most of that, some frustration with one's companions is inevitable.

And even when you return to *terra firma*, the psychological effects of such a trip can linger. Aldrin admits: “I went from having reached the pinnacle in man's space exploration to having effectively no where to go.” He struggled with alcoholism and substance abuse, but dragged himself out of what he now calls “a difficult mid-life transition.” The Moon, and the idea of exploration, has once again given his life purpose: he has written science-fiction books around the theme of living on the Moon, and appears on TV adverts touting the pleasures to come when we'll holiday there.



THE INDEPENDENT

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TELL ME ABOUT...false colour images

The full-colour picture of the Moon used in *The Independent* last Thursday surprised some people, because we're used to seeing a black and white (or grey and white) object in the sky, not something like Jupiter. Such false-colour images, though, are important nowadays for all sorts of astronomy, and also mapping the Earth and even in medical systems.

But by adding the full spectrum of colour to what appears at first to be just shades of grey and white – or even invisible – false-colour images add a whole new layer to our understanding of the world.

A typical false-colour image is produced by photographing an object through three separate filters, each “tuned” to a different range of light frequencies – or even, in the case of radio and X-ray astronomy, to radio frequencies. The “view” of the object from each filter

is recorded separately on special photographic film, or frequently nowadays on an electronic equivalent, called a “charge-coupled device” (CCD) array.

If you are viewing a distant galaxy, for example, you may want to know how much free hydrogen and how much free helium it contains, and at what sort of temperatures. Chemists already know the frequencies at which hydrogen and helium emit light: with that data you can set up your filters so that one will only allow through frequencies from hydrogen, another from helium, and another from other trace elements you are interested in.

To build the final image, each of the filtered images is printed only in one of the three “primary colours” – red, blue and yellow – and then combined together to form a full-colour picture. This will show where there is just hydrogen or just helium;

but where the colours overlap, you know both elements are present.

For the false-colour picture of the Moon, the “blue” filters were tuned to the wavelengths emitted by the metal titanium; the more there was, the bluer the area looked. The less there was, the redder it looked.

The power of this technique isn't limited to space. Satellites can see minute variations in the height of the sea and magnify them using false-colour techniques, so a difference of a few centimetres turns a strip of ocean purple – indicating a powerful El Niño. We can observe the growth of cities. And by applying false-colour methods to medical techniques such as positron emission tomography (PET) scans, we can see exactly where the active regions of the brain are when we are thinking about something.

— Charles Arthur

THEORETICALLY ...

Ice on Europa/ Animal organ transplants/ Intelligent offspring/ Smelling things

While everyone was getting excited about water on Earth's Moon, another Nasa spacecraft was finding good evidence for slushy ice on another moon – Jupiter's Europa. Focussing on a crater 26 kilometres wide and 600 metres high, the Galileo mission found that its base seemed to be shallow, and at the same height as the surrounding terrain. That would imply that the crater's shape was altered by slushy ice – reckoned to lie underneath the hard ice cap – after the crater formed. Many scientists are increasingly convinced that Europa harbours an ocean beneath its ice cap: this is more evidence on their side.

More debate on whether it's wise to proceed with “xenotransplantation” – the use of genetically-engineered animal organs in humans. This time the argument is in the letters column of the science journal

Nature. The US Public Health Service has rejected calls for a moratorium on such transplants (which has been imposed in the UK) over fears that retroviruses from the DNA of the donor animals could infect the recipients. “The risk would be justified only if large numbers of patients could be saved in the very near future and we had no hope of improving our risk assessment capabilities quickly. This is not the case,” says a writer from Oman. To which the American Society of Transplant Physicians and the American Society of Transplant Surgeons responds “it is time to proceed cautiously with well-defined and highly controlled clinical trials.”

Better worms make smarter children, according to research by a team at the University of Connecticut. Genetically identical mouse embryos implanted in different mothers

performed differently at mental tasks – the first time the uterus has been shown to have a definite role in the cognitive ability of the offspring. The work is reported in the journal *Neuroreport*.

We don't smell as good as we used to. That is, many of the genes that help produce olfactory receptors have mutated so far that they aren't useful anymore, according to scientists at the Research Centre for Macromolecular Biochemistry in Montpellier, France. Previously it was reckoned that about 1,000 different receptors, most with large parts of identical DNA, mediate our sense of smell. But the Montpellier team analysed those genes and found that 72 per cent have mutated in a way that prevents them functioning. Their report in *Nature Genetics* suggests that our forebears had a much better sense of smell than we do.

Less than meets the eye



DEBORAH ROSS
TALKS TO
VIRGINIA
BOTTOMLEY

SO, to the House of Commons, to meet Virginia Bottomley, once "The Most Hated Woman in Britain", but now nothing very much in particular, which she claims to adore. "I feel so liberated", she says. Really? To most people she is just another backbench MP which, yes, does provide a certain amount of *schadenfreude*. I'm ashamed to report.

Anyway, through the police at security, where my steel toe-capped Dr Martens excite the body scanner thing into a terrific frenzy of bleeping. I am thoroughly frisked, which is nice, because at my age with my looks it's about as close as I ever get to having a good time these days. "This place gives great frisk," I even say to Mrs Bottomley, when she meets me the other side. She blinks blankly. "Have you come far today?" she finally asks politely. This is the brilliant thing about Mrs Bottomley. More often than not, she just doesn't get it.

Now, to her office, which isn't a big posh thing, like the ones she had when Secretary of State for Health and then National Heritage. It's down this corridor, then down that one, then down yet more steps, right into the bowels of the building. It's a tiny office, with a single little window. She claims to love it, though. "It was part of my exit strategy," she says. Your what? "A year ago, I decided on an exit strategy, which included having this office, which used to be Paul Channon's, and Peter Shore's place - third bench from the back - and becoming deputy chairman of the British Council, and I got them all." Clever you! "I am rather pleased, yes," she says, looking rather pleased.

So, a year ago, you knew the Tories were on their way out, then? No, she says, she knew she was on the way out. Whatever the outcome of the election, she continues, she'd decided she didn't want to be a minister any more. "I'd done 10 years of it - 10 years of working 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I'd done all I could as well as I could. I wanted to redeem the true Virginia Bottomley." Who she? "She's someone who pursues the causes she cares about." And you couldn't do that as a minister? "I went into politics to achieve my goals, but a lot of other people go into it because they are fascinated by the intrigue." What are you saying here, exactly? That, in Government, less time is spent on policy than shafting each other? "There is a lot of superficial manoeuvring, yes." She never expected it and never got used to it, she adds. "I was very innocent when I first went into Parliament. And Peter (Bottomley, the MP and her husband) was no help at all. He's very other-worldly. He hasn't a clue what's going on around him

most of the time." He's fairly barking, your husband, isn't he? "He is actually a very innovative and creative man," she responds, loyally.

There doesn't seem to be a great deal of difference between Virginia in-power and Virginia post-power, although she claims otherwise. "I feel so liberated now," she cries. I first met her about five years ago, when she was Secretary of State for Health, and I described the experience as rather like being on *Family Fortunes*. Everything she said began with: "Our survey says..." Mrs Bottomley, how does it feel to be the most hated woman in Britain? "Well, our survey says that 80 per cent of people are more satisfied than ever with the NHS..." Mrs Bottomley, how can you justify closing so many of London's great teaching hospitals? "Well, our survey says that most of the medical profession are in favour..." Mrs Bottomley, what did you have for breakfast? "Well, according to a survey of myself by myself, I had toast which, according to the latest figures, is reckoned to be quite a tasty way to start the day." No, not really. But you get the gist.

Now, though? Now she is separated from her beloved surveys, and the civil service briefs she enacted with such murderous efficiency, what does she actually amount to? Is she bright? Does she have depths? Is she a person of substance? Can she even think for herself? Certainly, she takes an age to answer any question for which she isn't prepared. What do you do now you've got so much more free time? I ask her. Not an especially difficult question, I'm sure you'll agree. But she bites her lovely lip for a good 40 seconds - 40 seconds! - before she replies with: "I've been blitzing our garden, and having lots of bonfires." There may be a lot less to Virginia than meets the eye.

What does meet the eye is quite lovely, that's for sure. She is part Angela Brazil heroine and part Julie Andrews at her most adorably sanctimonious. She has a truly dazzling smile. Her looks have always attracted as much attention as anything else which, she says, has always irritated her enormously. "I am not a glamour girl, and have never been a glamour girl. I always admired Keith Joseph very much. Once, I went up to him in the Commons because I wanted to discuss a serious issue with him. He said: 'Virginia, what a lovely dress you are wearing today.'"

Anyway, a bell goes, and I must excuse her while she goes to vote on the fox hunting business. No, she doesn't care one way or the other, frankly. "Wild mammals are not what I came into Parliament for," she says irritably. While she's out, I inspect the big, framed photograph of the 1992 cabinet on her wall. I try to decide who I would sleep with if I absolutely had to. This turns out to be quite a frightening exercise because, in 1992, the cabinet not only included Michael Howard and Michael Portillo, but also David Mellor. When Mrs Bottomley returns, I ask her who she considers the most handsome. "Gosh," she says. Then, after looking at the photo for what seems an age, she finally announces: "Robin Butler. A gorgeous man. Terribly nice, too. Who do you think the most handsome?" Well, I say, caught on the hop rather, because I had already decided I would prefer to have all my limbs amputated and my eyes gouged out rather than have anything to do with any of them, "Ken Clarke's always seemed like a good bloke." "Yes! Ken's smashing. So punchy. No malice in him. Never bears a grudge." Poor Robin, I say. Dumped, just like that. You little heart-breaker, you. She blinks blankly again.

She says she has always been "earnest", which I can well believe. While still at school, she spent her holidays helping out people with "learning difficulties", which can't have provided many laughs, much less any cash

to spend on under-age fags and Dubonnet. She is, of course, the product of a dynasty of public service. Her father, John Cunniff, ran the Industrial Society. Her mother was a teacher who joined the Jarrow marches. Her aunt, Peggy, was a Labour member of the London County Council and married the Labour Cabinet Minister, Douglas Jay. He once said: "In the case of health and nutrition, just as in the case of education, the gentleman in Whitehall really does know better what is good for people than they people know themselves." So, not so much do-gooders as people who, via a sense of their own superiority, felt it was only proper they should impose their will on others. This isn't quite the same thing as displaying humanity, although Mrs Bottomley seems to think it is.

She is constantly referring to her Good Works which, frankly, makes them seem less like Good Works and more like pags on which to hang an ego, perhaps. There was the Ugandan family she allowed to live in her house for 18 months. ("The Jettas. The boy's a doctor now.") There are the hopeless constituents she always makes time for. ("My secretary gets very irritated, but I won't tell them to get lost.") There was the Maltese family who lived in a single room above a dilapidated shop in Bethnal Green, and whom she tried to save from eviction. "I went into court and got very cross on their behalf." Did you win? "No." So what happened to the family? "They got moved to a council flat, which was actually much nicer," she says.

Virginia was educated at Putney High School, then went to Essex University to study sociology. Although Essex was immensely left-wing back then, it was this experience which, ironically, took her from her Labour roots and turned her into a Tory. "All these students, going about

complaining they were oppressed. I said to them: 'You're not oppressed. Other people are paying for you to be here.' I'm not sure this is an entirely convincing explanation. Later, she says in relation to something else, that she couldn't stand the power of the unions at that time. This is more like it. A born bossy boots, she could never have allowed herself to be bossed.

At 19, she married Peter Bottomley - son of the diplomat, Sir James Bottomley - and her first and only boyfriend. She met him when she was 12 and he was 16, at a party given by an uncle of hers. She and Peter danced "the eightsome reel", whatever

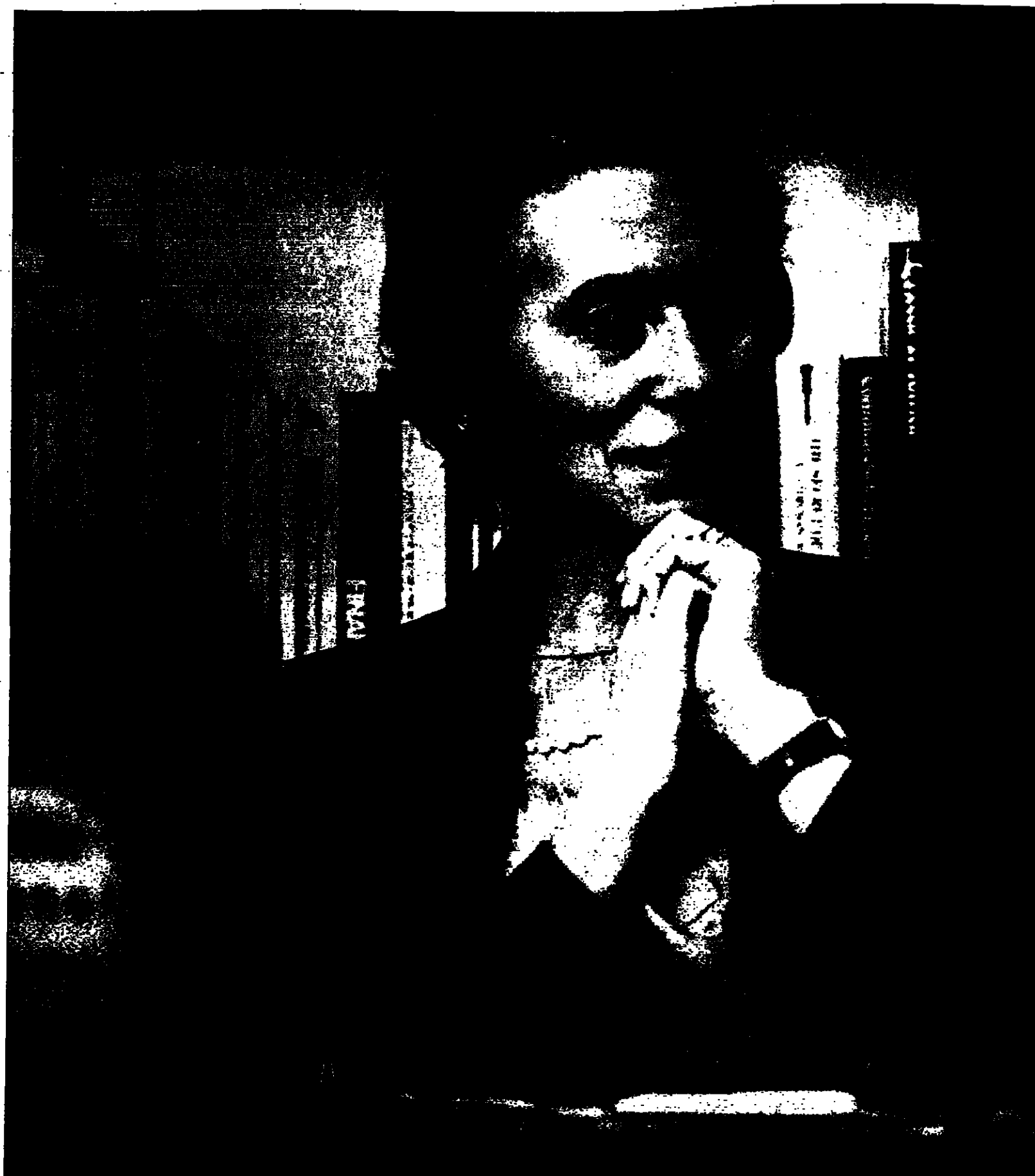
it's always seemed to me, is the thought of Virginia getting carried away sufficiently to fall into bed with someone without working out the statistical chances of pregnancy, taking a look at Peter, and deciding against it. She doesn't strike one as especially passionate. Indeed, for someone who has always provoked such fierce emotions, she seems quite emotionless. No, she doesn't regret not spending more time with her three children - Joshua, plus Celia and Adela - over the last 10 years. "I once said to them, do you mind mummy working? And there was this look of terror in their eyes. Oh no, mum's going to stay home."

He was generally regarded as, if not mildly barking, then at least not very steady. He once said of himself, Virginia seems terribly devoted, though. Peter and I argue about all number of issues, but ultimately we share the same sense of purpose. He didn't mind when I asked that Maltese family for lunch one Christmas.

Virginia's rise was steady. Parliamentary Private Secretary to Chris Patten. PPS to Geoffrey Howe. A junior post in Environment. A better one in Health. Then Health Secretary when Major became Prime Minister. She is still a great admirer of John. "A man of great decency and integrity with no affectations. Not like Tony Blair, who is all glitz and showbizzy parties."

Her period at Health was fraught with rows, particularly over plans for London, where the teaching hospitals fell victim to her reforms. In truth, she was only carrying out the policies inherited from her predecessor, Ken Clarke, a politician known to be adept at getting moved before the chickens come home to roost. But, still, she became a national hate figure. She was "Mary Poppins on Crack". She was "Nurse Matilda." Her name, it was discovered, could be re-arranged to spell Main Vile Tory Bigot. Hurtful? "I never got a single letter from anyone in the medical profession saying the reforms were a bad idea and..." NO, Virginia, watch my lips. Hurtful? Personally? "It hurt my children". Is she even capable of feeling hurt? Perhaps not. Perhaps, even, that's why she got the savaging she did. Could we make her bleed somehow? We never did.

Anyway, she has to go. She's got some paperwork to do, then it's off to her constituency. I ask if I can pretend to have another appointment with her first thing Monday, just so I can get another good frisking. "Shall I show you out?" she asks politely.



Virginia Bottomley: Part Angela Brazil and part Julie Andrews at her most adorably sanctimonious

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

'Robin Butler? A gorgeous man, terribly nice too. Ken Clarke's smashing, so punchy, no malice in him, never bears a grudge'

that may be, then partnered each other for a quiz. They won. What sort of quiz was it? "Oh, questions like, name all the four-lettered stations on the Northern Line." I see. "Oval? Pardon? Oval. A four-letter station on the Northern Line." Oh. Yes. Great party, by the sound of it. No wonder she grew up with such an abundant sense of fun.

They married, of course, when she was six months' pregnant with their first son, Joshua. Deliciously, this fact only emerged when Virginia was Health Secretary, and had just launched a campaign against teenage pregnancies. Did you anticipate being exposed? "It's a private matter, and something that happened 25 years ago," she says. The strangest thing about this business,

She is "less than useless" at cooking. She is 50 this week, and will be celebrating with a big family Sunday lunch. Celia will cook. She's a good cook, then? "She's a doctor. She knows about anatomy." She just doesn't make much sense sometimes.

Before entering Parliament, she put in 10 years of Good Works, first as a psychiatric social worker and magistrate at Lambeth Juvenile court, then as a researcher with the Child Poverty Action Group. She was elected as MP for Surrey South West in 1984, and has been their MP ever since. Her political career outstripped Peter's right from the start. He chopped and changed in junior ministerial posts, until Thatcher finally booted him out in 1990.

There are plenty of ways to avoid saying 'private school'



DINAH
HALL

LAST WEEK was decision time for the tiny minority of parents in this country for whom the word "choice" in education has any meaning. Some, like my sister, actually had too much of it: for her oldest boy she could choose between a selection of grammar schools, a highly rated comprehensive, two top-of-the-league independent schools and a slightly less polished and independent school which had offered them a music scholarship. Despite a serious flirtation with the comprehensive she plumped in the end for the music scholarship, which seemed the best compromise between her own ideals and her West-

minster/Cambridge educated husband's inclination towards the more "prestigious" schools. Their son is happy too - so it looks as if the school's policy of unlimited Club biscuits for the examination candidates paid off.

For us, there was only a momentary twinge of conscience as we turned down the offer of a place at a local comprehensive for our 11-year-old. He will follow his older brother into the tried and tested former grammar school (see, there are lots of ways you can avoid saying private school) where the rowing master looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger. I suppose

chunky chocolate biscuits, and hunky teachers are as good a basis as any on which to decide your child's educational future.

British children are materialistic, selfish and hedonistic, according to research carried out by the London School of Economics. They all have televisions in their bedrooms and are fed clothes, trainers and PlayStations on demand. Pizza Express on a Saturday night is a good place to see this mutant species of a child. There's usually a party of twentys celebrating 12th birthdays - they are deposited there by parents

who sit at the other end of the restaurant, thus giving them a sort of virtual reality experience of freedom. No longer free to play in the fields or streets, they are allowed instead to play at being grown up in restaurants. When we were there the other night spoiling our own materialistic, selfish and hedonistic brood, there was a table of pubescent girls next to us, all bee-sting breasts and scrawled blue lipstick. Every five minutes they would all get up and gallop into the lavatories like a herd of wildebeest that have just got wind of a lion, a phenomenon we had witnessed the week before with

another party of girls at The Mongolian Barbecue. What do they do in there, my boys wanted to know. As this was not a question that could be dealt with by the standard "go and look it up in the encyclopaedia" ploy, I resolved to do a David Attenborough and followed them in. They were - and I quote - "the brightest intake ever" at St Paul's girls' school (must rethink my educational ambitions for my daughters), but not quite bright enough to explain the attraction of the lavatories. The boys will have to wait a little longer to unravel the mysteries of the opposite sex.

I, meanwhile, am still struggling with the complexity of the fox-hunting issue. I'm quite clear on the hunters themselves - they enjoy killing foxes but naturally feel obliged to justify their unsavoury bloodlust on conservationist grounds. But what I don't understand are the "liberal" commentators, like Alexander Chancellor and John Mortimer, who don't hunt themselves but support the principle on the grounds of "freedom". Does this mean that they also support the right of children to stone cats - also considered a sport in some parts of the country?

There's nothing like tales from the playground for reducing me to a gibbering wreck of motherhood. My five-year-old, struggling with the politics of a friendship *a trois*, confided that when she felt left out she went and stood by her "favourite pole" and "thought about all the happy times they had together, and imagined how things could be". (I have a feeling she may have been reading *The Little Book of Calm on the quiet*.) But, oh god, the pathos - other children have best friends, she has a favourite pole.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Blair can't march in two directions

"BACKWARDS into a more democratic and pluralist future." It is not much of a rallying cry, but it seems to be the Prime Minister's way. The Government is about to publish a White Paper on the government of London which will muffle plans which are destined to revolutionise local government throughout the country with mundane and confusing detail. This is typical of Tony Blair's approach to constitutional reform: the most extraordinary and radical changes are being proposed as if they were merely tidying-up measures, and their far-reaching consequences played down, despite the huge potential gains for the quality of our democracy.

There is another paradox, in that Mr Blair's message to local government is all about leadership. His enthusiasm for directly elected mayors, not just for London but for all our big cities, suggests that the best way to get things done is to vest strong executive power in one accountable individual. In a pamphlet published rather unusually under his own name by the Institute for Public Policy Research last week, the Prime Minister urged existing councillors to show leadership. He advocated local referendums, citizens' juries and opinion polls as "part and parcel of a council's tool kit to help it exercise its leadership function".

Which tells us a lot about Mr Blair's particular concept of leadership. It is very different from the intoxicating substance which Margaret Thatcher drank in the middle of the night. However much Mr Blair wants to be compared to her in her conviction and resolution, his practice of the art of leadership comes close to what she once scathingly dismissed as "followership". His is a Confucian style, finding the centre of gravity of public opinion and then tilting it, ever so gently, in the direction of enlightenment rather than reaction. There is nothing wrong with that. It was the so-called "strong" leadership style of Mrs Thatcher which gave us the poll tax. Mr Blair is often derided for listening to focus groups or governing by referendum. He should, instead, be congratulated.

It is, after all, one of the entertainments of the moment to observe the Conservatives in full flight before public opinion, as the party slowly mobilises behind radical change in the way we are governed. After a sulky response to the Scottish and Welsh votes for change, the Tories want to vote Yes to the restoration of a London-wide authority, Yes to an elected House of Lords and Yes to one member, one vote democracy for themselves.

But all that is a sideshow compared to the amusement provided by the Government as it wrestles with a fundamental contradiction of Blairism. On the one hand, the Prime Minister wants to share his power with other levels of government and with the people themselves. On the other, he seems to operate a form of democratic centralism in the institutions of both his party and the state which militates against any meaningful pluralism.

How this contradiction is balanced will be the key to judging the White Paper on London. Look out for further contortions designed to thwart Ken Livingstone. Mr Blair does not seem to be confident that he can persuade Labour members in London of the obvious truth that Mr Livingstone would be the wrong candidate, and so has resorted to the usual device of leadership veto through the National Executive.

This newspaper welcomed the idea of a directly elected mayor last year, saying its greatest attraction was that it "will tempt into local government a dynamic personality who will inject life into a sphere where too often grey has been the predominant colour". So far, the front runners are Glenda Jackson and Jeffrey Archer. Oh well, we cannot be right all the time or straight away. Lord Archer may be colourful, but that was not quite what we meant. Ms Jackson would cut a remarkable figure as mayor, but her politics are dull. Never mind. The simple fact of giving Londoners back their democratic say will start something. And the effect on political parties of having to run "primaries" to choose their candidates will also help change their culture in time. The tension between mayor and the "streamlined" elected authority will generate democratic debate. If the mayoralty works well, other cities will follow. If local councils do not want it, they will have to appeal to public opinion through referendums and surveys.

Yes, there is a touch of pig-in-poke about the Government's programme. That is in the nature of radical reform. What matters is that it is change in the direction of greater accountability, pluralism and meritocracy. Beyond that, if we believe in democracy, we must trust the people.

That's enough, Philip



WE MUST hand it to Prince Philip. It turns out that, in the great debate about the relationship between the Royal Family and the people, his main complaint is that the second lot do not bow and scrape enough to the first. While the rest of the nation was pondering the significance of Diana's death, Prince Philip thought the real problem was that Cherie Blair failed to curtsy to the Queen at Balmoral after the funeral.

This is the same crusty reactionary who was at his wife's side when she spoke at the "People's Banquet" to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary last year, listening as she spelt out that the monarchy "exists only with the support and consent of the people". She went on to admit that the message of public opinion was often hard to read, "obscured as it can be by deference".

Yesterday's reports that her husband is the chief obscurantist can only help to modernise the monarchy, by drawing attention to the fact that the age of forelock-tugging is over.



MILES KINGTON

THE EMERGENCE of Tony Blair, and the eclipse of Old Labour, has been described as a tale with Shakespearean overtones of heroism and tragedy. Just how true this is, is shown by a fragment of a recently rediscovered Shakespeare play, *The History of King Tony*, or *New Love's Labour Lost*...

Scene: a battlefield in a marginal part of the Midlands. Enter King Tony with his victorious forces, attended by Dukes Prescott, Cook, Mandelson etc. Lord Livingstone stands off to one side, plotting.

Prescott: See how the Tories flee the field in panic! This once proud army has become a rabble. Their shattered troops now barely have the strength to undertake five years of opposition!
King Tony: Nay, say not five! Say ten! Say fifteen years!
For who can stop our royal progress now?
Will it be William, Duke of Hague, whose checks Do not yet know the razor's manly touch?
Lord Banks: Nay, for he is but an unborn

babe in shape.
And they are led by nothing but a foetus!
All laugh, save King Tony.
King Tony: Lord Banks, Lord Banks, this is no way to speak.
The rough and rugged talk of barrack room May well suit men upon the battlefield, But now that we won this famous day, We are the leaders! We have come to reign! And therefore must be seen and heard by all To be right statesmanlike and noble.
Lord Banks: So, no more gaffes?
King Tony: No, none. And no more going Upon the News Quiz as you were wont to do.
Lord Banks: Alas, for that gave useful pocket money.
Even if I was not always very funny.
Enter the Earl of Ashdown, with his band of men.
Ashdown: King Tony! All hail! A famous victory That you and I have won this day against the Tories! See them run to London's crowded City, To take up safe directorships in town,

Till your new windfall tax shall bring them down!
King Tony: What say you, Ashdown? OUR victory? We did not fight together on the field!
My men, unaided, beat the enemy, Under New Labour's flag of change and trust! We took no help from you, nor have done yet.
Ashdown: So, no seat for me in your new cabinet?
King Tony: I have not seats enough for my own gallant men
Who stuck by me through all the fallow years When New Labour languished in the wilderness! Brave Cook! Stout Prescott! Straw and Mandelson! These are the men I have about me now! Gone are the years of foul and Tory sleaze! God give me honest comrades such as these!
Enter a man dressed all in a white suit
Martin Bell: Beware, your Majesty, of boasts of virtue, Whence you paint yourself as better far Than those poor nullities who came before. Beware the day when such as your friend Straw Shall have a son whose smoking fuds him out.

Beware the day when e'en the Duke of Cook Shall try to fix his friend, the lovely Gaynor, With jobs that look most strangely like a favour. Beware, beware, the pride that comes with power! Be humble in your most exalted hour!
Exit the man in white
King Tony: Who was that man, who looked me in the eye
And did not bend the knee in reverence?
Mandelson: They call him Martin Bell, good sir. He walks alone.
Much foreign fighting has he seen and, so they say, It hath made him mad. But worry not, For I shall find some defect in his legal costs To make him seem as venal as the rest.
King Tony: Good Mandelson, go spin the truth for me, And tell the world about our victory. Now, gentles all, let's to the victory feast. And drink the toast: Old Labour, Now Deceased!
More of this tomorrow.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Big on protection: "Gog" and "Magog" stand watch over the fields on the Gog and Magog Hills in Cambridgeshire

Photograph: Brian Harris
A 9x12ins print of this photograph can be ordered on 0171 293 2534, price £15

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Let Kosovo defend itself

AS SERB paramilitary forces ignite the " tinder box of the Balkans", Kosovo, a Belgrade strategy instigated by President Slobodan Milosevic is now in full swing. The fact that Milosevic is acting now, rather than later, bears witness to the growing force of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) led by Bujar Bukoshi. Arms and money have been, during the past two years, secretly pouring into the KLA organisation, principally from supporters in Switzerland, on the understanding that Kosovo will not be another Bosnia. That is, where an arms embargo was placed on the effective arming of Bosnian Muslims.

Serb paramilitaries, and now regular units of the Serb army under direct instructions from Milosevic, will be met by an indigenous force. The international community should not attempt to tie its hands.

Dr LEONARD STONE
London E1

A CLEAR and unequivocal message on Kosovo must be sent by today's meeting of the Six Nations Contact Group on former Yugoslavia.

That is that further terror against the 90 per cent majority Albanian population by Belgrade's police and army will not be tolerated. Surely we have learnt the cost of appeasing Slobodan Milosevic, Europe's last dictator.

Had we stood up to him in 1992 four years of war in Bosnia could have been avoided. If he is allowed to continue this slaughter while denying Kosovo the autonomy he removed in 1989 the consequences for the region and Europe as a whole will be catastrophic.

BEN BRADSHAW MP
(Lab, Exeter)

The Germans' burden

A REPORT by Imre Karacs (5 March) referred to "Polish concentration camps". The camps he described were German, in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Dr TEODOR GOROSZENIUK
Guy's Hospital
London SE1

Police threaten freedom

I AM writing on behalf of the Steering Committee of the Standing Conference of Arts and Social Sciences, whose members are Deans of Faculties and representatives of Subject Associations in those disciplines.

We wish to express our grave concern over recent events at the University of Central England. A volume of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs has been the subject of police action and the university may be prosecuted. The implications would be extremely serious for academic freedom. While Mapplethorpe's images are controversial, we believe that his status as an artist and the academic context within which the book was being used ought to have acted as a dear guarantee of the integrity and legality of the university's position. We hope common sense will prevail and that no further action will result.

Professor JENNIFER BIRKETT
Convener, steering committee,
Standing conference of Arts and Sciences
University of Birmingham

Proud to be provincial

STEREOTYPING is something of a problem, and so is parochialism; in fact the two often go together. But surely not - good grief - in *The Independent*.

Is Vanessa Thorpe's corner of London really so very parochial that she believes "the homosexual community" has reacted with "shock and anger" to the statement by Ian Tucker [former acting editor of the gay magazine *Attitude* who says he is now straight]? (Article, 3 March) What a tabloid stereotype her local homosexual community must be. In the interests of good journalism, she might consider building up a more representative circle of acquaintances.

In fact, no idea cuts quite so unpleasantly close to the moral bone for lesbian, gay and bisexual people as the idea of putting social pressure on anyone to deny or deform their sexuality.

Amateur on the wing

I'VE long since ceased to be amazed that people with demonstrably no training in art and/or no knowledge of the study of perception, ideology and creativity and their essential role in artistic understanding are given acres of space to expatiate on any new work, or exhibition. Paul Valéry's musings on Gaudin's *Angel*, by the sculptor Antony Gormley, are no exception ("A new friend for the North", 28 February).

The vacuous saying he quotes of a local poet that "art dignifies a place", language as slack as his - eg "art counts for nothing if it does not move ... it aspires to something transcendent ... from which to construct our dreams" - does understanding no favours. To assume a work is good merely because it is called "art" is to ignore that, like democracy or justice, art is a category whose examples need assessment by expert reasoning evidence, and criteria. Where were these in the article? For those dismayed by their absence, it's no consolation that a visually and epistemologically illiterate culture like ours attends to and admires only the art or interpretations of art it deserves; nor that its comprehension of its Vermeers, Shakespeares, or Turners, will be just as amiss.

DAVID RODWAY
Lecturer in Art and Philosophy
Art Faculty,
Kensington & Chelsea College
London SW10.

Legal aid reform flawed

THE Lord Chancellor's proposal to tackle the problems of legally aided medical negligence claims (Report, 5 March) by restricting such cases to specialist lawyers is misconceived.

It fails to deal with the inherently unfair costs rule whereby innocent legal authorities are unable to recover their legal expenses; this promotes legal aid "blackmail" where cases are settled for commercial reasons regardless of their merits.

The Legal Aid Board relies on the opinion of the applicant's lawyer in deciding whether or not to fund the case. Such advice is not independent since the lawyer has a financial interest in advancing the claim; he is paid regardless of the outcome.

The conditional fee system has in-built incentives to avoid unnecessary litigation and to ensure that claims are properly assessed. Legal aid provides exactly the opposite incentives.

ANTHONY BARTON
London N1

Smoke without fire

PRESIDENT Clinton "said he may have been alone with Monica Lewinsky in his office on as many as five occasions" but "denied categorically having a sexual relationship with her" (Report, 6 March). Is this the same Mr Clinton who admitted smoking marijuana but denied inhaling?

DAVID LEARNER
Tooting, London

Flagpole fallacy

YOU have repeated (Report, 7 March) the myth that the Royal Standard is never flown at half mast, even on the death of a sovereign. This is not true. On the death of Edward VII in 1910, the Royal Standard was flown at half mast for seven days.

PETER FOXTON
Buckhurst Hill, Essex

A tale with everything: the Prince of Darkness, great men - and King Tony

John G. Jones

A few spanners short of a Prime Ministerial toolkit



DAVID WALKER

The Cabinet Secretary is conducting a crucial review. He's asking if Tony Blair has enough power

FOR two decades the most intelligible element in the Tory political project has been to "roll back the state". We, too, said Labour, have done with Big Government. So here they are in power with a highly favourable fiscal position, and further curbs on spending promised by the Chancellor. As a result the size of government is shrinking daily. But what is the endgame? Just what, in terms of its size and dimensions, does the New Labour state look like?

In Germany and in France, government remains big. Come left, come right public spending remains half national product. In Japan and the United States government stays small. It may have to grow in Japan (for who else is going to look after all those little old Japanese ladies in their eighties) but both those societies seem historically to have fixed government at between a quarter and a third the size of the economy.

Then there is Britain. The Tories tried and tried but only briefly succeeded in pushing the ratio below 40 per cent (that was in the Lawson boom). Under Major, government grew back to the size it was when Jim Callaghan greeted the removers outside Number 10.

But thanks to Kenneth Clarke's flanker, Gordon Brown now sits on a ratio dipping down to 38 per cent. If, as the headlines say, he keeps the clamps on till 2001 (and there is a mild downturn rather than a recession during the intervening years) it will fall further.

Does Labour then believe, as the Tories used to, that smaller government is good because it allows the substitution of individual for collective choice, which in turn expands freedom – or at least one American-oriented version of it?

That kind of question, of course, rarely gets asked by practising politicians, beset as they are by concrete questions about preventing, say, a virulent outbreak of waiting-list disease. But stopping a long way short of the big question – how big ought government to be – New Labour seems remarkably ill-equipped to answer even intermediate questions about how much public spending is enough. The reason is to be found in the axis on which the Blair government turns, between Treasury and Number 10.

We journalists love stories about disharmony between Prime Minister and Chancellor. Yet far more important than personal relations is the large and growing disparity between their capacity to do their respective jobs.

Tony Blair is a weak prime minister. That may sound outrageous, given his personal and party standing. And yet, measure him against his Chancellor in terms of his wherewithal to think strategically while monitoring the progress of Labour policies and the effectiveness of its spending decisions.

Policy unit, strategic presentation unit, Alastair Campbell, Minister without Portfolio – all have proven relatively ineffectual in providing Mr Blair with a grasp of both big picture and daily decision-making.

Zip up your anoraks and consider, for a moment, the machinery under the Blair administration's hood. How do the Treasury's "comprehensive spending reviews" – into the purposes of departmental outlays – mesh with the scores of "qualitative" policy reviews and initiatives set up by individual ministers and the Prime Minister himself.

Case in point, housing for those on lower incomes. Housing Benefit review is the Treasury's baby. But housing support helps explain social exclusion and, by all accounts, Tony Blair is taking an abiding personal interest in the work of the Social Exclusion Unit, which is based in the Cabinet Office. There exists no mechanism for bringing them together – apart from rather clumsy Cabinet committees which, since Tony Blair cannot chair them all, are as likely to perpetuate problems of coordination and conflict as resolve them.

In January the Prime Minister did something he should have done last May. He asked the Cabinet Secretary (the newly appointed Sir Richard Wilson) to conduct a thorough-going appraisal of the tools of the prime ministerial trade – the set of levers in Number 10 and the Cabinet Office meant to secure coordination, prioritisation, monitoring and delivery on the promises with which Labour came to power.

Sir Richard has been listening and thinking hard, and is due to report to the Prime Minister (coincidentally) around Budget Day. There is a case for a radical overhaul of the whole lot and a proper "prime minister's department" is now a possibility. Even if the PM had not commissioned this review, the new Cabinet Secretary would probably have had to do something with the loose baggy monster that is the Cabinet Office, embracing intelligence, civil service management, and a rash of units – for example by bringing it administratively closer to the PM's under-staffed offices next door.

Hard men will straightaway say: offices, machinery are secondary. Politics is all about personality – if Peter Mandelson or the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Jonathan Powell, had been more effective, questions about co-ordination and priorities would not have arisen.

But machinery does matter, as Gordon Brown proves. The Treasury opines about spending and the entire shape of the Blair Government is altered. Perhaps, even if Blair were administratively stronger, outcomes would not be much different. But at least we would have a sense of considered government strategy.

Whitehall, like nature, abhors a vacuum. In Sir Richard Wilson's hands lies – to put it grandiloquently – the Prime Minister's fate. If the occupant of Number 10 lacks the capacity to govern by deciding spending priorities and quantities, the clever and well-supported tenant of the house next door in Downing Street certainly does not.

The catastrophe Blair, Clinton and Saddam have in common



Iraqi women and their children are also affected by Gulf War Syndrome

Photograph: Robert Fisk

UN inspectors should be looking at Saddam's cancer wards as well as his palaces, says Robert Fisk

SOMETHING terrible happened towards the end of the 1991 Gulf War. While we were congratulating ourselves that the Iraqi army had been driven out of Kuwait and Saddam Hussein had been (supposedly) "defanged", an unknown chemical plague spread across southern Mesopotamia. It was to cripple British and American soldiers, along with untold thousands of Iraqis, some of them children as yet unborn. In the years to come – when it began to afflict our own veterans – we called it "Gulf War Syndrome".

So did the Americans. As for the Iraqis, they remained silent for years – even as their own people began to fall victim to unexplained cancers around the former battlefields. Even now, Saddam Hussein's regime has made not a single statement about the epidemic of cancers afflicting the largely Shiite Muslim population. Here, then, is something which President Clinton, Prime Minister Blair and Saddam Hussein have in common: a total failure to explain the calamity afflicting thousands of their people after the 1991 conflict.

Nor can there be any doubt that Americans, British and Iraqis are suffering from the same affliction. As I was touring the cancer wards of Basra and Baghdad last week, looking at the men

and women and especially children who are dying of lymphatic cancers – the cause of which, Iraqi doctors said, was use by the Allies of depleted uranium shells – Tony Flint, the acting chairman of the British Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association, was warning that the very same shells could be responsible for cancers that have killed at least 30 British veterans. Just one day later, the American National Gulf Resource Centre, representing a coalition of US veterans groups, announced that as many as 40,000 American servicemen may have been exposed to depleted uranium dust on the 1991 battlefields.

The kidney problems, respiratory failures and cancers now being diagnosed among Allied veterans appear to be identical to those afflicting Iraqis. In most cases, the Iraqi victims were diagnosed only years later – just as Gulf War Syndrome was only grudgingly acknowledged in London and Washington, long after Allied troops had returned home. I first heard of these symptoms among Iraqi last year, when an Iraqi opposition leader in Damascus – a Shiite cleric who knew former Iraqi troops seeking refuge in southern Iran following the 1991 war – told me that many of

these ex-soldiers had fallen ill. Most had fought in the tank battles south-west of Basra; their armour was being bombarded with depleted uranium shells by the US First Infantry Division. American troops were exposed to the same dust when they moved forward after the battles and helped to destroy the contaminated wreckage of the Iraqi armoured units.

In southern Iraq, the battlefields west of Basra include some of the city's best farmland; its inhabitants continue to eat tomatoes, onions, potatoes and meat from fields that were almost certainly drenched in uranium dust. The same toxic residues must have drained into the rivers and sewers of Basra, polluting even further the city's water supplies. This, at least, is the opinion of Basra's cancer surgeons. The implication is terrifying: for the first time since the bombing of Hiroshima, cancer has been linked to warfare.

No wonder, then, that no one really wants to find out the cause of this sickness. The American veterans' groups have accused the US Defence Department of "a deliberate attempt to avoid responsibility for consciously allowing the widespread exposure of hundreds of

thousands of servicemen and women". The Ministry of Defence in London, investigating depleted uranium as part of a Gulf War Syndrome inquiry, still claims that there is no evidence of the metal being responsible for any abnormal diseases.

Western aid agencies inside Iraq are equally cavalier. UNICEF has sought no details of child cancer deaths linked to the war – though it admits to hearing of the reports. Even more shameful is our own failure – that of the UN and all those involved in sanctions imposition – to provide enough of the medicines that could cure Iraqi child leukemia victims who are otherwise going to die. To deny the existence of Gulf War Syndrome may be sin enough. To deny medicine to its Iraqi civilian victims is shameful.

There is an obvious response to this. Why should we – the British, the Americans, the West – do anything when we do not know for sure what is blighting the people of southern Iraq, as well as our own military veterans? Saddam is to blame – write that out 100 times. But there is an equally obvious retort: open a UN investigation into the pestilence that is sweeping through those who fought in 1991 and those who live there now but who were unborn at the time. UN inspectors inside Iraq can paw through the palaces and offices of the highest Iraqi officials in their hunt for evidence of bio-chemical warfare. So why cannot the UN carry out an equally intrusive – equally humanitarian – inquiry into the cancers, kidney failures and deaths that accompanied the creation of the New World Order?



As Robert Fisk's article makes clear, innocent children are dying of cancer because of weapons used during a war before some of them had even been born. The Independent has linked with Care International and Medical Aid for Iraq Children, which are already doing much to relieve poverty and sickness in Iraq, to bring relief to these helpless victims of war. We will work closely with them to ensure that your money helps bring medicines to the children who most need them. Please send cheques, made out to The Independent Iraq Appeal, to PO Box No 6800, London E4 5BT.

You do the cooking, mummy, I'll pay no rent



KIM SENGUPTA

More and more young men think there's no place like home

JUST imagine, men. You get home after a hard day at the office and look at the dishes piled up in the sink. There is a hundredweight of old newspapers littering the floor. As you flop down to watch *Newsnight* with your takeaway pizza, putting off the chores yet again, you remember you have not got a clean shirt, let alone one that is ironed to wear the next day.

But it needn't be that way. You could be going back to a warm, clean home, eat a well-cooked supper, go out on the town, come back with your girlfriend, and still have a hot breakfast served – to both of you – in the morning. Like living in a hotel, but a whole lot cheaper. It's called living at home with mum. And increasingly it's what millions of young men do.

Some good boys have always lingered at home, among them Charles Saatchi and Geoffrey Boycott. But a new report, by advertising agency Mellors Reay, claims that nowadays one in nine men between the ages of 30 and 34 are living with their parents, and this is well up on previous surveys. A recent cartoon in a men's magazine showed a son tucking into his dinner and saying to his parents waiting on him: "I shall really miss you when I send you off to a home".

These thirtysomethings are Thatcher's children. They have witnessed, if not personally experienced, the boom and bust economy. Jobs are no longer for

life, and who knows what's around the employment corner. No doubt it makes sense not to over-extend yourself with a mortgage and while the chance lasts save as much as possible. If these practical, calculating men eventually do get around to acquiring property, it will be several rungs up.

Extended families are common in many non-European societies but this is not an ethnic phenomenon. Indeed, in the Asian community the trend is for young men to move out of the family home at the earliest opportunity, a subject of much concern among the older generation, who bemoan the loosening of cultural ties.

The young men of the Mellors Reay survey do not appear

to have any such problems. Middle-class mums are liberal minded. That means tolerance of the man-about-town lifestyle: girlfriends get to stay the night without embarrassment. Conveniently, mum's being there becomes a ready excuse – sorry, can't make a living-in commitment, darling.

Yet we don't know much about how mum (or dad) really feel. Do the fathers and mothers enjoy having the company of their ageing sons? Or do they feel there has simply been no respite throughout their life from the daily cycle of cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing? And the girlfriends, how long can they put up with men who may flounce off back to mother after every row? If

they did cohabit, would the men survive without motherly indulgence? Yet the post-modern "mummy's boy" is no longer a spotty wimp. The new stay-at-homes have money, more than their peers, to spend on designer clothes, fast cars, trendy restaurants and bars. The advertisers rub their hands – growth in the number of stay-at-homes has coincided with increased spending on male perfumes, skin-care, toning and assorted hair gels. Spending on men's toiletries has risen from £370m a year from 1991 to around £550m this year. In Cool Britannia, it seems, men are soaking themselves in Calvin Klein, but leaving it for mum to put the top back on afterwards.

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PRINCESS DIANA'S will has provoked much controversy, but not a single question about its most prominent mystery. Why does her pre-tax estate amounting to £21,711,486 not include a single penny for charity? How can this gap possibly be explained? Surely this generous, caring princess, who devoted so much of her life to helping charitable causes, could never be accused of being heartless or mean.

Moreover, she was always conscious of the powerful example she set for others, whether it was in embracing an AIDS victim or walking through a mine field. Everything we know about her makes us believe that she would have wanted to encourage by example people to share their wealth with the needy and less fortunate.

But when her own will was published, her favourite charities must have raised an eyebrow – from the AIDS Trust to the Red Cross's anti-landmine campaign, from the English National Ballet to Great Ormond Street Hospital. The famous children's hospital relies heavily on bequests – for example, of the £10m it raised last year, about £3m came from legacies in wills. What is the explanation for this extraordinary omission in hers?

When Pandora rang the Princess's six favourite charities and the Red Cross anti-landmine campaign offices and asked for their reaction to the will, the universal response was tight-lipped reticence. "We could not possibly comment on that". There may be an institutional reason. Behind their silence, perhaps, lies the looming presence of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, which has raised £40m since her death (including the royalties from Elton John's re-written "Candle in the Wind"). It is on track to receive a total of £100m by the end of its first year. Yet seven months have passed since her tragic death, and during that time the



Memorial Fund has announced no grants for any causes. When asked if Centrepoint, the London shelter for young homeless and one of the Princess's six favourite charities, expected to receive money from the Fund, Anna Mangold, its press spokeswoman, said on Friday, "We have no expectations because we have to function based on the funds we have." Would she be surprised if Centrepoint and other of the Princess's favourite charities received no money from the Memorial Fund? "It would be odd, but we can't really comment or we might jeopardise our application."

Yesterday the *Sunday Telegraph* published a report saying that the Memorial Fund was expected to announce its first grants later this week. According to Christopher Spence, head of the grant sub-committee, "The main grants will, however, go to the organisations which

she was actively involved in." Pandora was very relieved to see this, although surprised. For just two days earlier, on Friday afternoon, the Fund's press spokeswoman, Vanessa Corringham, told *The Independent*, "The Fund has no obligation to give these groups funding." When pressed on the subject, Corringham stood her ground, pointing out that there still were no published guidelines for the Memorial Fund's grants.

Why is that; why were no guidelines issued by the Fund's advisors for seven months? The answers to those questions will have to come from those who now manage her Memorial Fund. And why was not a single penny earmarked for charity in the Princess's £22m estate? Unfortunately solicitor-client confidentiality means we are never likely to know exactly what she intended.

Pandora

Adopt a Cub for Mother's Day

and help WSPA save bears from cruelty.

Guler was found wandering the streets of Istanbul. Hunters probably shot her mother so Guler could be taught to 'dance' for tourists. With her brother Erol, she's now safe at WSPA's bear sanctuary. You can help keep these cubs safe by adopting them as a gift for your mother. For £15 we'll send an adoption certificate, two photos of the cubs and their story. For £25 you'll get all these, plus a video of the cubs playing. Please help WSPA protect bears worldwide.

Guaranteed Mother's Day delivery for orders received by 16th March.

I want to adopt Erol and Guler. Please return this form to the address below.

Your name _____
Your address _____
Postcode _____

Date of birth (if under 18) _____
If you are adopting a cub as a gift for your mother and want their name on the certificate, please write their names here: _____

I want to adopt Erol and Guler for

☐ £15 (for an adoption certificate, 2 photos and the cubs' story)
☐ £25 (for all the above plus a video of the cubs)

(Please make your cheque payable to WSPA or fill in your credit card details below.)

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(Please circle the card you are using.)

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stock market about extending
Sets and even reducing trad-

the start of the year.
Second and third liners, for

up on the earnings per share calculation.

source: Bloomberg
www.bloomberg.com/

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Allied merger with Seagram runs into trouble

By Andrew Yates

ALLIED DOMECQ's hopes of creating a wines and spirits Goliath by merging its drinks business with that of Seagram, the Canadian leisure group, are fading. But Allied is likely to settle for a distribution agreement with the Canadians.

Allied is also in talks with other large drinks groups around the world and could now look to forge several distribution agreements with different partners on a country-by-country basis. Such a move would still create a strong portfolio of best-selling brands and bring the promise of substantial long-term benefits for Allied Domecq.

Allied has initiated the talks with rivals in an effort to create a new force in the world-wide drinks industry to take on the might of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan. They merged last year to create Diageo and now have a dominant position in the world-wide spirits market.

A merger of Allied and Seagram's drinks businesses would have created the largest spirits group in the world with annual sales of more than £4bn and a bewildering array of top brands. Allied owns Beefeater gin,

Teacher's and Ballantine's whisky, Courvoisier cognac and Sauza tequila.

Seagram counts Chivas Regal whisky, Martell cognac and Mumm champagne in its portfolio.

But Seagram is understood to be unwilling to give up majority control of its spirits business. Instead of a merger the two groups are now likely to make do with a partnership in North America, where they will jointly market and distribute these leading brands.

This would fail to generate the sort of cost savings a full merger with Seagram was likely to have accomplished.

Allied, however, may choose to team up with other drinks groups in areas such as Asia, a vital market for the industry. It is holding talks with Bacardi, the US group which owns the world's most popular spirits brand, and Pernod Ricard, among others, about further distribution deals.

Allied's talks with Seagram have stalled due to the Canadian group's insistence that it does not want to lose control of its spirits business, according to industry sources.

Allied's spirits business is bigger than Seagram's, with annual sales of £2.5bn compared with £1.6bn. On that

basis, Allied could have expected to have gained a majority share of a merged group. However, the Bronfman family, who run Seagram, are believed to be unwilling to allow Allied to have a majority holding.

"Edgar Bronfman (chairman of Seagram) was never going to give up control of the spirits business lightly and it looks like Seagram have been dragging their feet on a merger," said an industry source.

A full drinks merger with Seagram is still the preferred option for Allied and it could yet pull a deal out of the bag, but such a move is becoming increasingly unlikely.

Any merger or distribution agreement may not be finalised for months. Even so, Allied maintains it is under no pressure from its institutional shareholders to do a deal and it continues to talk to everybody in the industry. Seagram is also exploring other options.

"Diageo has set the cat among the pigeons and everybody is talking to everybody else," said one analyst.

Allied's shares fell 16p to 554p on Friday but have risen from 407.5p last year on hopes of a drinks deal.



Looking for the ideal blend: Allied Domecq has initiated talks about distribution deals with international rivals to counter Diageo's dominant position in the spirits market

BDB reassures City over launch of set-top boxes

By Andrew Yates

THE BATTLE of to sign up customers for set-top boxes which will allow them to join the digital television age has started. British Digital Broadcasting (BDB), a joint venture between media groups Granada and Carlton, yesterday announced it was going ahead with plans to put the television set-top boxes in the run up to Christmas, where they will come complete head to head with similar products from BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster.

BDB has appointed six manufacturers to produce hundreds of thousands of new boxes including Grundig, Pace, Philips, Nokia, Sony and Toshiba. They will be retail for about £200 each, a similar price to BSkyB's products, although both companies will heavily subsidise the cost of the boxes.

BDB's "plug in and play" boxes will give viewers immediate access to 15 channels of free television from existing terrestrial broadcasters BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5, with up to 15 more available on subscription. BSkyB is hoping to attract viewers by offering up to 200 channels.

The move will allay growing fears in the City that BDB would fail to launch its service as planned this autumn after a delay in the arrival of its new chief executive. BDB has poached Stephen Grabiner, currently in charge of United

News & Media's national and regional newspapers, to head up its push into the digital market.

However, Mr Grabiner is on a 12-month notice period, which has prompted a full-fledged tug-of-war for his services between the two companies.

"We are on track for our launch in the autumn. We are in discussions with United News & Media and are hopeful that the appointment of Mr Grabiner will be resolved by the time of the launch," said a spokesman yesterday.

Digital television stands to transform the media industry, offering customers a plethora of new channels and better quality pictures.

However, the dawn of the new television era has already created tensions between the two main competitors. BSkyB is suing Carlton for £30m which it owes in compensation, having been forced to pull out of the BDB consortium by the Government. However, Carlton is withholding payment until BSkyB can secure the digital rights for Premier League football, which it has so far failed to do.

BSkyB has also claimed that the two digital systems are incompatible, which could cause serious problems if customers wanted to switch between suppliers in the future. However, BDB claimed yesterday that, with the aid of an adaptor, the two systems can be used via the same set-top box.

Japan plans new £48bn boost for economy

TAKU YAMASAKI, an official in Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, said the government plans new measures worth 10 trillion yen (£47.8bn) to boost the economy, although he denied international pressure had forced the step. The ruling LDP has proposed four economic packages since October. The latest involved a one-time ¥2 trillion income-tax cut and a ¥30 trillion package to shore up banks. Mr Yamasaki also implied the government has a plan to lift the Nikkei 225 at the end of the month. Most Japanese companies close their books at the end of March, and the government is hoping to keep insurance companies and banks from posting losses on their stockholdings. The Nikkei 225 index rose 283.42 points, or 1.68 percent, to 17,131.97 on Friday.

- Bloomberg

Record year in the markets

ACTIVITY in the financial markets reached a record of nearly \$1.8 trillion in 1997, despite the onset of the Asian crisis. Although this contributed to a marked drop-off in volume late in the year, the level of activity for the year as a whole was 12.6 per cent higher than in 1996, according to new figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Most securities markets shared in this growth, but international bonds took the lion's share.

Smiths set to buy Menzies

AN ANNOUNCEMENT that WH Smith is to take over the John Menzies Retail chain is expected this week, with the sum involved likely to be a higher-than-expected £60m. WH Smith will gain about 80 stores in Scotland and 150 in England and Wales, and is expected to embark on an efficiency drive to make cost savings of more than £10m. It will be Smith's first big acquisition for a decade. The Early Learning Centre, Menzies' other retail group, is not involved in the deal.

Rush to invest in PEPs

INVESTORS are pouring money into personal equity plans (PEPs) in a last-minute rush before the Budget. PEPDirect, a discount broker, said its sales during the first week of March were up 63 per cent over the same period last year, and February's sales had soared 165 per cent, as customers rushed to reap the benefit of what could be their last chance before PEPs are phased out and replaced by Individual Savings Accounts.

Skills shortage hits growth

SHORTAGES of skilled labour are the most serious hurdle to business growth, a survey of members by the Institute of Directors has revealed. Although more than 80 per cent of company directors want to expand over the next two years, one in five said they faced skill shortages. By contrast, only 2 per cent said their biggest problem was a lack of orders or sales, although some cited the strength of the pound as a barrier.

Sainsbury ready to thwart Asda deal with bid for Safeway

By Andrew Yates

SPECULATION is mounting that J Sainsbury, Britain's second-largest supermarket chain, could launch a takeover bid for Safeway, its troubled competitor.

Sainsbury is thought to be considering a bid to thwart a potential tie-up between Safeway and Asda. Such a move would create a significant competitive threat, relegating Sainsbury to number three in the supermarket industry's pecking order.

However, industry sources suggested that Sainsbury is only likely to act in response to any move by Asda. It thought to favour a merger with William Morrison, the Yorkshire-based supermarket chain.

Sainsbury and Safeway have never held any takeover talks. A bid would be fiercely contested by Safeway's management led by chief executive, Colin Smith. He is keen to retain the group's independence and is currently unlikely to entertain any overtures from Asda or Sainsbury.

One industry source said yesterday: "This looks like a plant from Sainsbury. What they are doing is warning they will join the fray if Asda renews its interest in Safeway."

Safeway and Asda held merger talks last autumn and went as far as seeking confidential advice on the deal from competition authorities, only to abandon discussions when they became public.

Yet analysts believe Safeway's disappointing trading performance, which has seen it

make three profits warnings in a year, makes it increasingly vulnerable to a takeover.

The group's predicament was highlighted last month when it revealed Christmas trading had been poor and profits for the year to March 1998 would fall to £375m compared with analysts' forecasts of around £410m and the £430m it made in the previous year.

Mr Smith is understood to be keen to address Safeway's trading problems rather than seek a merger. "Safeway con-

tinues to focus on improving its trading performance," a company spokesman said yesterday.

The acquisition of Safeway would give Sainsbury a stronger presence in Scotland, where its market position is relatively weak. However, some City observers remain sceptical about the merits of such a deal and are concerned that Sainsbury, which has had its own trading problems in recent years, would consider such a large and complicated purchase.

A bid for Safeway by Sains-

bury would create huge competition concerns and the Government would no doubt require the combined group to sell a large number of stores.

However, analysts believe the trend towards fewer and larger supermarket chains will continue. They predict that the consolidation of the industry is likely to gather speed over the next few years.

Somerfield and Kwik Save have recently announced plans to join forces to take on the might of the bigger multiples.

Two million more set to be living in poverty by the next election

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THERE could be as many as 2 million more people living in poverty by the next election, despite the Government's efforts to reform welfare.

The warning, from a left-of-centre think-tank, is based on two main weaknesses of the Government's strategy: the refusal to restore the link between benefits and earnings, rather than prices; and the prospect of an increase in unemployment as the economy slows.

Writing in *New Economy*, the quarterly journal of the Institute for Public Policy Research, David Pichaud, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics, says of the Chancellor's strategy: "It is radical as far as it goes but it is not enough." It will do little to tackle the legacy of poverty and inequality inherited from the previous government, he says.

On the definition known to

economists as "relative" poverty, the number of people living on less than half of the national average income, the article sets out this inheritance. The number soared from 4.4 million, or fewer than one in 10 of the population, in 1979 to 10.3 million, or nearly one in every five Britons in 1994/95.

A third of the poor are children, living in either lone parent or unemployed households. This means that a quarter of all British children grow up in poverty.

Professor Pichaud estimates how far the numbers in each category might increase by the year 2002. The good news, he calculates, is that the rate of growth in the number of lone parent families might slow for demographic reasons as the tail end of the baby boom generation gets beyond peak child-bearing age.

He also calculates that the Chancellor's New Deal to get the unemployed into jobs could reduce unemployment by a

cumulative total of up to 400,000. In addition, the introduction of a minimum wage at £4 an hour would lift about 300,000 of the working poor above the poverty line.

On the other hand, the outlook depends on the success of macroeconomic policies at keeping unemployment down. As the economy slows, a higher unemployment level could add up to 800,000 to the numbers in poverty.

But the biggest impact will come from the Chancellor's announcement in his July Budget that Labour would not restore the link between benefits and earnings broken by the Conservatives. Professor Pichaud concludes: "It is not only the number that would be increased. Those who are already poor would become even poorer."

The net impact will be an increase in numbers of between 350,000 and 2 million by 2002, taking the total as high as 12 million.

Full employment nirvana boosts pay settlements

By Barrie Clement

THE CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer's cherished goal of "full employment" has already been achieved in towns as diverse as Aberdeen and Andover with a consequent boost to wages in those areas.

Most of the localities enjoying full employment - defined as where the jobless rate has dipped below 2 per cent - are in the South-east but outside London.

Crawley, Newbury and Winchester and Eastleigh are among the other areas where unemployment is below 2 per cent and where wage rates are therefore under pressure from a tight labour market.

Against a background of inflation running above 3 per cent, pay settlements have been rising since the middle of 1997, *Income Data Services* points out in its latest report.

Its analysis of more than 120 pay settlements shows that just over half provided pay increases

of 4 per cent or more. The proportion of deals at 4 per cent or higher has more than doubled in six months with the dip in headline inflation to 3.3 per cent yet to register in wage determination.

Union negotiators are concerned about predictions that inflation will bounce back up to 4 per cent in the spring, possibly pushed up by tax increases in the Budget in a fortnight's time.

Skill shortages are also forcing up the level of pay settlements. Land Rover recently said it was looking abroad to recruit 150 production engineers because of a shortage of qualified employees in this country. Honda said it was forced to look well beyond the local labour market in Swindon to recruit an extra 400 workers. Unemployment in the Swindon area is now down to 2.1 per cent.

Meanwhile, 30,000 electricians have voted to accept a 12 per cent pay increase by next January. These skilled workers, many of them employed by

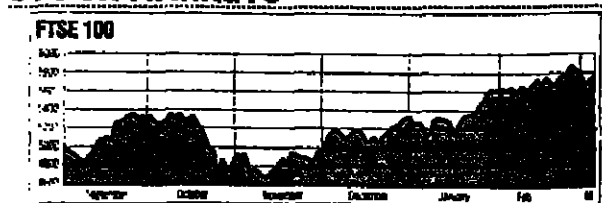
electrical contractors on prestige sites such as the Millennium Dome and the Jubilee Line, will receive 7 per cent this month and another 12 per cent by next January.

Importantly, the agreement allows for premium rates to be negotiated at site level for the first time. This means electricians employed on the large projects in construction will receive even greater pay boosts.

Yet the IDS Report asserts that there are widely different pay settlements making up the average earnings growth of 4.7 per cent for the whole economy. While big increases of 9.6 per cent are being paid in the finance sector and 14.3 per cent in "other services", there were far lower rises of 3 per cent in public services and 2.9 per cent in retailing.

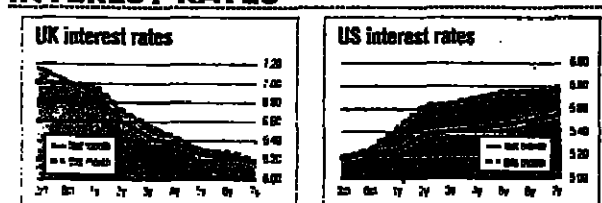
The analysis points to the difficulty of assessing the present performance of the economy. "Rosy scenarios are followed by gloom which is followed by 'stable but slow' expectations."

STOCK MARKETS



Indices	Close	Wk's chg	Wk's chg %	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield %
FTSE 100	2782.90	15.60	0.27	3650	2180.1	3.275
FTSE 250	5250.00	49.60	0.95	5285.5	4384.2	2.889
FTSE 350	2767.40	11.00	0.40	2796.5	2075.7	3.222
FTSE All Share	2694.78	11.38	0.42	2720.59	2058.07	3.197
FTSE SmallCap	2480.10	20.90	0.85	2489.7	2182.1	2.896
FTSE Europe	1382.30	9.30	0.68	1389.6	1226.2	3.188
FTSE Asia	1012.30	5.80	0.58	1135.5	955.9	1.02
Dow Jones	8569.39	23.67	0.28	8565.06	6356.78	1.628
Nikkei	17131.97	200.30	1.18	20910.79	14488.21	0.89
Hong Kong	10919.53	-581.16	-4.89	18820.31	7900.13	3.506
Dax	4715.95	6.12	0.13	4782.84	3192.33	1.614

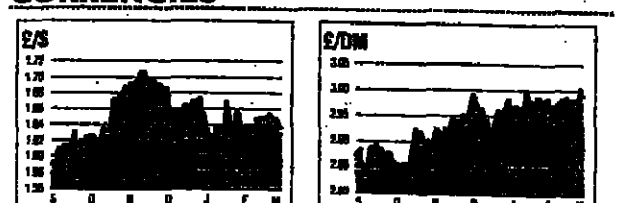
INTEREST RATES



Money Market Rates			Bond Yields				
Index	3 month	1 yr	1 yr	10 yr	1 yr	Long bond	1 yr
UK	7.56	1.31	7.56	0.83	6.03	-1.27	5.98
US	5.69	0.13	5.61	-0.19	6.74	-0.50	6.02
Japan	0.74	0.23	0.70	1.33	1.88	-0.89	2.50
Germany	5.52	0.27	5.77	0.47	5.00	-0.67	5.90

MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Rises	Price	% chg	Falls	% chg	
Inchcape PLC	232.50	44.00	MP Furniture	95.50	-26.54
Aldi Stores	198.50	33.00	DPS Furniture	445.00	-21.83
BICC PLC	155.00	24.50	Campanile PLC	426.00	-10.97
BTR PLC	190.00	28.75	Next PLC	753.00	-8.11

CURRENCIES



Pound				Dollar			
	Index	% chg	Yr Ago		Index	% chg	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6345	-1.20	1.8017	Swiss	0.6118	+0.45	0.6243
D-Mark	2.9879	+1.11	2.7692	D-Mark	1.6352	+2.17	1.7191
Yen	208.84	+1.76	195.57	Yen	127.77	+1.67	121.94
Euro	105.80	+0.50	98.10	\$ Index	109.00	0.80	104.20

OTHER INDICATORS			
	Index	% chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	12.75	-0.67	19.43
Gold (\$)	294.45	-4.70	248.70
Silver (\$)	6.31	-0.06	5.18

Base Rates			
	Index	Day	Yr ago
GDP	114.30	3.00	110.97
RPI	169.50	3.30	154.40
Base Rates	7.25		6.00

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.3627	Italy (lira)	2.873
Austria (schillings)	20.43	Japan (yen)	205.86
Belgium (francs)	59.99	Malta (lira)	0.6300
Canada (\$)	2.2640	Netherlands (guilders)	3.2774
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8477	Norway (kroner)	0.17
Denmark (kroner)	11.15	Portugal (escudos)	256.42
Finland (markka)	8.9555	Spain (pesetas)	245.89
France (francs)	9.73970	South Africa (rand)	7.7884
Germany (marks)	2.966	Sweden (kroner)	12.91
Greece (drachmas)	460.91	Switzerland (francs)	2.3749
Hong Kong (\$)	12.29	Turkey (lira)	366.059
Ireland (pounds)	1.1681	USA (\$)	1.5989

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only



BILL ROBINSON ON THE PITFALLS IN WELFARE TO WORK

The cost of getting people back to work

IT IS NOT surprising that Gordon Brown, a famously workaholic Labour chancellor, does not much like the idle rich. But nor does he like the idle poor. Getting people off welfare and into work is a central objective of this Government. But does he have a coherent strategy to deal with the inherent conflict between encouraging people to find work and paying them a subsistence income if they fail? Many assert he doesn't. They are right in that he has not really addressed the question of incentives for the existing stock of unemployed. But I believe he does have an interesting, though very long-term, strategy to induce a work culture in the young and stem the flow of new, young unemployed on to the dole.

To see how intractable the unemployment problem is, suppose for a moment that in an advanced industrial society like ours the least able 10 per cent of the working population are incapable of supporting themselves by selling their labour on a free market. Most of the things that they can do can be done more cost effectively by machines at home or by cheap labour abroad. However, this shouldn't mean that these people starve. The combination of technical progress and economic specialisation that has marginalised the bottom 10 per cent of our nation has made the rest of us rich enough to support them. Indeed, the relief of poverty is surprisingly cheap. The cost of giving 2 million people £100 per week is £100m. That is a tiny fraction of the total public spending bill

of £260bn and surprisingly small in relation to a total social security bill of around £80bn.

There is, unfortunately, a further hidden cost to getting the poor enough to live on. The problem leaps into focus as soon as you start to think about the 10 per cent just above the bottom 10 per cent. How do they feel about getting up on a dark winter's morning and struggling into work to bring home a wage of say £120 for a 40 hour week? Compared with a life of leisure on £100 per week, 40 hours work for £120 may seem a poor deal. Work that seemed worth doing for £3 per hour looks distinctly less appealing when the net gain, compared with the dole, is only 50p an hour.

That, in a nutshell, is the central problem that welfare-to-work must resolve. Once the state pays people for doing nothing, anyone with low earning power, whether in or out of work, will calculate that it is barely worth working. That is the poverty trap created by the well-intended relief of poverty.

Do the unemployed really choose not to work or is joblessness thrust upon them? In the 1980 or 1990 recessions many of the unemployed had no choice in the matter. But in the current, service-sector led boom many of those who do not work have turned down jobs as not good enough. So it is, to some extent, a matter of choice and incentives. One well known solution to the incentive problem is to give everybody a basic income (paid for out of taxation) of £100 per week, whether they work or not.

This would mean that the second poorest 10 per cent would, in effect, get the dole along with the bottom 10 per cent. Their reward for working would be restored to £3 per hour. But it will not have escaped the reader that giving everybody £100 per week is 10 times as expensive as giving this sum only to the bottom 10 per cent. The cost is £100m, equivalent to over 50p on the basic rate of income tax.

These back-of-envelope sums reveal a basic but important truth: relieving poverty is quite cheap, but getting rid of the poverty trap is very expensive. It would involve increases in taxation that Mr Brown is committed not to impose. Yet, as long as the poverty trap exists, it will be extremely hard to move people from welfare into work.

Expressing the cost in tax terms helps us to understand another key point. The poor, who lose their welfare payments as they start to work, face a very high marginal rate of tax. We can prevent that by giving the dole to everybody, so that there is no benefit withdrawal as you move from welfare to work. But that is expensive, as we have seen. So the cost of eliminating the high marginal rate of tax on the poor is to impose a high rate of tax on everybody else. What actually happens, of course, is that benefits taper off as in-work income increases. Tapered benefits cost more than withdrawing the dole completely as soon as you get a job, but are much less expensive than giving the dole to everybody. The more gradually bene-

fit is withdrawn, the greater the incentive to take a job, but the greater the cost to the Exchequer and the higher the taxes on the better off.

In other words, the price of encouraging the poor back into work might be tax rates that discourage the better off from working so hard. This is a trade-off that the Government has never talked about, not surprisingly as it has ruled out higher taxation, yet wants to encourage the poor back to work. Does this mean that Welfare-to-Work is doomed to failure?

Not necessarily. If you can't afford to make the poor better off in work, then the only other option open to you is to make them worse off out of work. This, in effect, and on a modest scale, is the new strategy: get young people back to work by telling them that the dole is simply not an option. If they won't work, or be trained, then they must live on their parents' or beg on the streets. The strategy has been criticised for its narrow focus on the youngest unemployed. But that is to misunderstand it completely. For the reasons explained above Mr Brown cannot afford to give adequate incentives to find work for all those currently without it. He has, therefore, adopted a more limited objective of reducing the number of new young unemployed. The strategy includes a stick (dole not an option) as well as carrots, such as help finding work, subsidies to employers, etc.

What is clever about the strategy is that it is not politically acceptable to say to an out-

of-work 30-year-old father of two that the dole is not an option. But it is politically acceptable to say that to a school leaver. A gradualist way of tackling the unemployment problem is to steadily raise the age below which the dole is not an option (eg no dole for students). Behind this strategy lies another important idea, which is essentially that being in work is habit forming, as is being on the dole. If you can inculcate the work habit at an early age, then you will create a nation of people whose instinct is to look for work, even if in the short run it pays little more than the dole. That idea is backed by another: our hypothetical person who opts for the dole at £100 rather than work at £120 is actually behaving rather short-sightedly. The point about having a job is that it can lead to a much better paid job. Forcing people on to the jobs ladder is a way of preventing short sighted behaviour that can condemn youths to a lifetime on the dole.

Clearly, it would be wrong to expect overnight miracles from welfare to work. The "why work?" syndrome will not be quickly eliminated without a major reform of the tax and benefit system that does not seem to be on the agenda. But, in the meantime, it would be churlish not to applaud and support a strategy aimed at persuading the young that working, even for low wages, is infinitely more rewarding in all senses than life on the dole.

Bill Robinson is a Director of the consultancy London Economics

How Britain's managers have been cast as incompetents on the psychologist's couch

By John Willcock

A NEW BOOK will gladden the heart of every downtrodden employee, from "alienated workers" to "workplace deviants". The *Psychology of Managerial Incompetence*, a sceptic's A to Z guide of vacuous management buzz-words and business school fads, seeks to explain just why so many managers mess things up.

The author, Adrian Furnham, Professor of Psychology at the University of London, starts with a quick tour of well-known jokes about management techniques. There is seagull management, where a manager flies in to an organisation, dumps on the employees, and then flies out. And, of course, there is mushroom management, where the employees are kept in the dark and occasionally have fertilizer dumped on them.

The author seeks to find the

psychological reasons behind managerial incompetence, and lists a number of strategies used by bad managers to fend off instructions to change.

One is the "temper tantrum method" where the manager "calls the person requesting the change names, stamps his or her foot, appears outraged and insulted, even apoplectic". This contrasts with the "hush-hush method" where the manager takes the advocate of change aside and explains, in hushed tones, that he'd love to help but clearly the other chap doesn't understand the real wishes of the managing director, the real meaning of the latest figures, or the contents of the secret corporate plan.

Professor Furnham does not just want to lay bare the emotional inadequacies of British management. He also wants to help managers see how they can improve their performance.

But the professor has little time for appraisal techniques, suggesting that "all appraisal systems interfere with team work, foster mediocrity, concentrate on short-term outcomes and focus on the product not the process".

He also charts the decline of the Big Desk as a symbol of corporate power. Apparently, tables are now in, while the smaller the laptop computer that sits on them, the greater the prestige.

The rise of e-mail in the corporate world comes in for analysis too. The book suggests that composing e-mails can embolden people in hours of non-productive activity. Another problem lies in their incomprehensible English.

"The irony is that the non-literary, monoglotic techies... might feel more comfortable communicating with there is little

evidence that the quality of the communication increases."

Not surprisingly, business gurus get a mauling. The author writes: "It has been said that journalists first used the term guru to describe management theorists because they could not spell the word charlatan." Ouch.

Gurus are "simple organisms designed specifically to convert doublespeak into air miles," he says. "Many suspect the business gurus are greedy dogmatists who peddle insane, simple solutions to difficult and complex questions."

Perhaps as a pre-emptive strike against any possible attacks on his book, Professor Furnham addresses reviews of management books. "Regular reviewers are often gratuitously nasty. They have found it pays."

Well Professor, I'm happy to buck the trend and say this book is a gas. Just don't leave it on your desk for the boss to see it.

Stoy Hayward launches advertising drive

By Roger Trapp

STOY HAYWARD is this week throwing down the gauntlet to its rivals in the middle ground of the accountancy profession by unveiling a nationwide advertising campaign designed to demonstrate it is "clearly associated with growing business".

The move, which is costing about £500,000, comes as many

firms are responding to the increased pressure at the top of the market caused by the planned merger of the Big Six organisations Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse by stressing their allegiance to the vibrant owner-manager sector.

But Adrian Martin, Stoy's managing partner, believes they will find it difficult to match his practice's expertise in this area.

"Stoy is a post-war firm," he says. "We've always acted for post-war industries... It's in our blood and part of our culture."

The campaign is the latest stage in a strategy begun three years ago. Although it in effect began a few days ago with "teaser" posters with the strapline "Go Forth and Multiply", it hits its stride today, when about 280 sites around

England will carry posters with the first two words of that line replaced with "Come Here", with the firm's logo below.

In an attempt to show that there is substance behind the slogan "Business Grow-How", the initiative has also involved sending partners to some of the world's leading business schools and carrying out extensive research.

Revenue to change rules to offset millennium bug costs

By Diane Coyle

GORDON BROWN will announce in next week's Budget a tax break to help companies tackle the "millennium bug" problem. The Inland Revenue will allow companies to set spending on special computer software against their tax bill, at a cost in foregone corporation tax revenue of as much as a few billion pounds.

The millennium problem arises because older computer programmes wrote dates as two-figure numbers when computer memory was more expensive. Some systems will therefore run into huge problems when the first two figures of the date change from "99" to "00" in the year 2000.

Although the extent of the "Y2K problem" has become the subject of extraordinary hype by some consultants, com-

panies have said it will cost the hundreds of millions of pounds to fix. Zeneca and Royal Sun Alliance have both said they expect to spend £100m. And Unilever has put the cost at £250m.

The new tax measure, to be spelt out in an article in the April edition of *Tax Bulletin*, clears up an uncertainty about exactly what year 2000 spending could be set against taxable profits. Purchases of off-the-

shelf software will qualify for this treatment.

However, spending on big new projects such as upgrading the company's computer hardware, will continue to have to be written off gradually for tax purposes at a rate of 25 per cent of the remaining balance each year.

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No such thing as a free lunch?

The proposed new corruption Bill will tighten up the law on corporate hospitality. By Grania Langdon-Down

SUPPOSE Company A, hoping to get business from Company B, arranges for B's managing director to attend an important football match as the guest of A's directors.

The match is preceded by drinks and lunch, during which (among other things) A's current and future activities are discussed. A clearly hopes that B's managing director will enjoy the event and be influenced by it.

Few people would consider this exercise in corporate entertaining corrupt. But where should the line be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable hospitality?

For the Law Commission, which last week published its recommendations and draft Bill to modernise the law of corruption, the answer lies in the intentions and expectations of those providing the hospitality.

If A had simply sent B's managing director a ticket for the match with its compliments, the Commission decided it would be "hard to resist" the inference that this was primarily, if not exclusively, a bribe.

But for a prosecution to succeed in the "lunch" scenario, it would have to prove that A thought that, if B's managing director did give it the contract, it would "probably be primarily" in return for the lunch and ticket and not as a result of a constructive discussion in congenial surroundings.

According to the Commission's report: "The practical effect, we believe, would be that corporate hospitality would be the subject of prosecution only where it would blatantly corrupt on any view."

Law commissioner Stephen Silber QC added: "Under our proposals, there would be nothing wrong with any amount of corporate hospitality if it was done with the consent of the

principal - if the employer - and the employee involved did not perform a public function."

Some commentators have grumbled that while executive boxes at Wembley or Twickenham and hospitality tents at Wimbledon or Henley may outrage the true sports lover huddled in a rain-swept seat, they are no places for law-makers.

But the Commission took the view that corruption struck at the root of commercial life and democracy itself and it was time to reform the existing "obscure, complex, inconsistent and insufficiently comprehensive" legislation covered by the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916 and the common law offence of bribery.

It also highlighted two other areas where the present laws were out of touch with modern society - in making a distinction between public-sector and private-sector corruption and in tackling international corruption.

It had reconsidered the distinction between public and private bodies in the light of the changing economic environment. It was unclear, for instance, how the present law would operate in relation to a privatised utility which still provided a public service but did so for the profit of its shareholders, who would include the Government.

The Commission concluded that the distinction should go. The question of whether there should be any distinction between the behaviour of a public servant and a private employee would be dealt with in sentencing.

Mr Silber said the Commission was also aware of international initiatives to combat corruption and so had recommended the law should apply to the corruption of foreign officials. This would catch attempts

by UK companies or their agents to win contracts overseas by offering bribes.

Last summer, the Government declared "war on sleaze and corruption in all areas of public and private life", proposing a new single offence of corruption, covering both public and private sectors, with a maximum sentence of seven years.

The Home Office is now studying the Law Commission's report and, once it has the recommendations of the joint committee on parliamentary privilege on the position of MPs, it could produce new anti-corruption legislation in the next session of Parliament.

The Commission recommended four new offences, triable either in magistrates' or Crown courts. These would do away with the "illogicality" of existing legislation which meant

that someone committed an offence by accepting a bribe but not by acting in return for the bribe or by attempting to earn a reward.

Under the proposed offence of performing functions corruptly, it would be sufficient to prove that a person's conduct was motivated by the hope of a corrupt reward, whether or not one had been agreed.

The offences also introduced the concept of "an agent" - someone, such as a solicitor, accountant, employee or company director, who has agreed to act for another person. It also applied to someone acting for the public, ending the uncertainty over whether the law applied to police officers, judges, local councillors and employees of privatised industries.

The other new offences would be:

■ Corruptly conferring, or offering or agreeing to confer an advantage;

■ Corruptly obtaining, soliciting or agreeing to obtain an advantage; and

■ Receipt by an agent of a benefit which consists of, or is derived from, an advantage, which the agent knows or believes to have been corruptly obtained.

Updating the law also meant defining the meaning of "corruptly", because existing case law was in "immense disarray". Their recommended definition was: "A person who confers an advantage should be regarded as doing so corruptly if he or she intends that an agent should do an act or make an omission and believes that, if the agent did so, it would probably be primarily in return for the advantage rather than for some legitimate reason."

Mr Silber said the consent of the agent's principal would be a defence. However, it would not apply if the agent was pursuing a public function. For example, if a barrister was bribed to act in breach of his or her professional duty, the client's consent would be immaterial.

For Christopher Murray, president of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association and head of criminal law at London solicitors Kingsley Napley, the definition was "too wordy and too confusing for a jury".

"Although the Commission has made a good shot at it, I cannot say I am terribly impressed with their definition. It is unworkable. How can a jury reach a conclusion something was 'probably primarily' in return for an advantage. It imparts such a degree of uncertainty. 'I know the Commission

was concerned about corporate hospitality but the difficulty with corruption is it requires a moral judgment and that, as with obscenity, is in the eye of the beholder."

George Staple, former head of the serious Fraud Office, is now back with his old law firm Clifford Chance as senior partner in charge of fraud and regulatory matters.

He said the SFO had considerable success in prosecution of corruption cases, such as the conviction of the former chairman of British Bus for paying a £1million bribe. However, it would have been easier to prosecute others if there had been a clearer definition of "corruptly".

"I think the Commission has come up with as good a definition as you are going to get. But you will still have to think hard about a set of facts to de-

cide which side of the line they fall."

Roy Amlot QC, chairman at the Criminal Bar Association, said the Commission's proposals appeared "very sensible and refreshing" and should cope with modern behaviour in a modern society. However, there would still be a major difficulty with corporate entertaining. "Nothing is going to alter that fact that it is bound to involve a big grey area. If you give somebody cash, there isn't a problem. If you give them a ticket to Wimbledon, that is understood as accepted corporate entertaining. But if you give someone an expensive holiday, is that a bribe? That has to be left to the jury to decide."

Legislating the Criminal Code: Corruption, Law Commission No 248, available from The Stationery Office £16.35.



Sporting life: Executive boxes and hospitality tents have become part of the scenery at events like the Henley Regatta

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Negatives highlight the positive



New frontiers: A man holding a fan depicting a white woman on the balcony of a house. Johnston's title for the picture, *A Jamaican Artist*, suggests the fan was home-made, contradicting beliefs that colonial rule stymied black arts. (Below) The market place in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Photographs: Harry Johnston/The Royal Geographical Society



A newly-discovered photographic study of life in the Caribbean destroys old stereotypes. Matthew Brace reports.

A SET of fragile glass plate negatives of the Caribbean taken during the first few years of this century, which lay undiscovered for decades, is being hailed as one of the most accurate and revealing photographic records of the region ever produced.

When the Royal Geographical Society's picture library manager, Joanna Scadden, opened a dusty drawer in the vaults and began examining a set of previously uncatalogued slides she did not realise immediately that she had unearthed a collection of significant cultural and historical importance.

It was the work of Sir Harry Johnston, a British government official based mainly in colonial East Africa, who was sent to Haiti, Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad in 1908 by his friend, the US President Theodore Roosevelt, to document on film the life of the region's blacks.

Until Ms Scadden's discovery, the bulk of the negatives had remained largely unknown, languishing in the society's basement.

While the collection (which goes on display at the society this week) painted a picture of poverty and hardship it also, more importantly, broke a mould by discarding the stereotypical image of blacks as mischievous children or savages.

According to the Jamaican art historian Dr Petrine Archer-Straw, who has curated the photographs, Johnston's scenes of markets, farmers and workers in rural settings were ahead of their time.

"They depict a vivid and accurate record of a lifestyle that has changed considerably in this century. These

photographs defy post-independence political ideas that present the region as polyglot, multi-racial and hybrid.

"Instead we find a Caribbean community that is predominantly black," Dr Archer-Straw said.

She added that to some Caribbean historians most British historical writers of the period were unrepentant imperialists who believed West Indians were, on racial grounds, unfit for self-government.

"Johnston, on the other hand, believed that blacks had experienced an accelerated development and proved themselves capable of governing their own affairs," she said.

"His views may not pass now, but at the time they would have been considered progressive."

The Jamaican High Commission, the British Council and the Royal Geographical Society have jointly organised a repatriation programme through which each of the four island nations will receive a full set of prints to add to their archives.

Another aspect of the project is the implementation of an educational programme in the Caribbean designed to raise debate and promote a wider understanding of the context in which Johnston operated.

The programme will include history evenings for university students and teacher trainers to discover ways in which visual evidence such as these photographs can be used in education.

Sir Harry Johnston's Caribbean collection is on display at the Royal Geographical Society in London for two weeks before touring the Caribbean.



Making their way: A Haitian peasant (above) at market and a Haitian mother with her children. Photographs: Harry Johnston/The Royal Geographical Society



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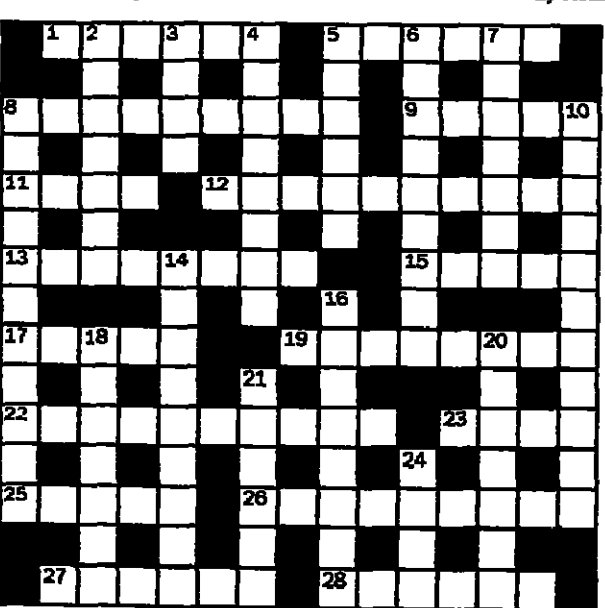
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 353, Monday 9 March

By Paula



- West African country among a number coming to convention (9)
- Macho European accepted in a grudging way (6)
- Old money is concealed by people's prophet (6)
- Pop out to put on the fish (7)
- Getting close to conflict with member (4)
- Army unit learns about point of practice (8)
- One who's profited from the Tiger economy? (3,3)
- Ten Basil brewed contains cold water (6,3)
- Rave about quarters housing navy in this manner (7)
- Name of US mountains we're told (11)
- Settled off the beaten track (3,2,3,3)
- Account of Roundhead soldiers occupying land (9)
- Painter's sign to finish so hurried up inside (8)
- Blow in and have a salutary effect on one (3,4)
- Sick with desire and showing resentment (3-4)
- Poles dubious after being disaffected (6)
- Many plug a modern art movement (4)
- Compares energy put into second portrait (8)
- Chap is not quite sure about bundle of papers (5)
- Hate being seen in drab horn-rims (5)
- Note a light variety of stone (8)
- Home instruction is working out (2,8)
- Spot fine by the police (4)
- New honour received by first-rate woman (5)

- Unpleasant lot parade before monarch (6)
- Terrific being with the French director who's legendary (6)
- Roads the learner negotiated in Hampshire (9)
- Don't hold on to work permit at first (3,2)
- Joint funding for South coast resort say (4)
- Expeditionary gear? (6,4)

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